

E. What Makes a Good School

Our monitoring team has compiled a checklist of both traditional objective indicators and supplementary objective and subjective indicators of educational quality in K-12 schools. We employ these 48 indicators to assess the quality of a school as part of our systematic monitoring efforts.

Traditional objective indicators of educational quality include the following items:¹

1. Test scores (on a range of tests)
2. Average GPA's (secondary level)
3. Average SAT scores (high school)
4. Attendance
5. Drop-out rate (secondary level)
6. AP courses offered, and number of students taking AP exams (high school)
7. AP exam passage rate (high school)
8. Percentage of students graduating "UC eligible"
9. Percentage of students going on to college

Other objective and subjective indicators of educational quality include:

1. The direction the school is heading generally (history, trends, patterns, etc.)
2. Level of engagement between educators and students
3. Level of engagement of students generally
4. Enthusiasm level of students
5. Energy and enthusiasm level of teachers & school site administrators
6. Quality of student work

7. Organization & management of school site programs, activities, and day-to-day affairs
8. Leadership skills of school site administrators
9. Pedagogical skills of teachers

10. Stability of faculty and administration
11. Percentage of credentialed teachers

¹ We note that these 48 factors can be divided into those for which the school site has the primary ability to change and those for which the district's central office has the primary ability to change.

Also, it should be noted that research has shown a direct correlation between the "performance" of a school and the "poverty factor"...how low the socioeconomic status level of the students might be. However, these 48 factors only address what district administrators and school site educators can do to improve a school, whatever the poverty level of the student population might be.

12. School culture (includes mood, degree to which people get along, respect for differences, motivation, pride, vision)
13. Awards to educators
14. Awards to students
15. Awards to school
16. Record in inter-district and intra-district competitions
17. Condition of physical plant
18. Classroom environment
19. Availability of instructional materials
20. Availability of research tools
21. Quality of instructional materials & research tools
22. Quality of computer technology generally
23. Extent to which computer technology has been integrated into the instructional program
24. Degree to which school is meeting the needs of its students (can include special programs)
25. Level of teacher and school site administrator expectations
26. Quality and relevance of on-site staff development
27. Richness of the curriculum generally
28. Extent to which curriculum challenges the students
29. Curriculum for LEP students
30. Curriculum for Special Ed students
31. Curriculum for low achieving students
32. Curriculum for high achieving students
33. Discipline practices generally
34. Suspension & expulsion rates
35. Diversity or lack thereof
36. Within school desegregation
37. Redesignation practices
38. Mainstreaming practices
39. School-family-community partnerships

It should be noted that these 48 indicators may not all be reflected in higher test scores, which is why it is always important before making any educational decision to include

additional data beyond the basic standardized test scores. In the following section, and indeed throughout this report, we refer often to the SAT-9 numbers. Comparative API numbers can be very useful, and the very high and very low scores tell you a great deal. But they never tell you the whole story.