

## Alachua County Public Schools earn higher grades in 2017

More Alachua County Public Schools earned A and B grades, none earned a failing grade and some jumped two or more grades this year according to information released by the Florida Department of Education. The district's overall grade remains a B, although the total number of points it earned to achieve that grade increased this year.



Twenty-three Alachua County Public Schools earned A and B grades for the 2016-17 school year, including Shell Elementary School, which rose from a D last year to a B this year. That compares to 20 ACPS schools that earned As and Bs for the 2015-16 academic year. The district went from 1 to no F grades this year and cut the number of D grades in half, from 6 to 3.

Shell was one of four local schools that jumped at least two grades this year. Most notably, Lake Forest Elementary School, which had the district's only F grade last year, boosted its grade to a C this year. Meadowbrook Elementary's grade rose from a C to an A and the district's elementary eSchool grade rose from a D to an A.

Of the seven schools that had Ds or Fs 2016, five posted increases (Shell, Lake Forest, the elementary eSchool, Idylwild, which went from a D to a C, and Rawlings, which also went from a D to a C). The other two schools in that category, Hawthorne (D) and Terwilliger (D), stayed at the same grade.

At the elementary school level, school grades are based on student performance on the state's standardized tests. The formula, which uses a point system, is particularly weighted towards the scores of each school's lowest-performing students.

At the middle and high school level, additional criteria are factored into school grades, including such items as students taking advanced courses, students earning career certifications and graduation rates.

"I'm particularly pleased with the gains made by those schools that were among our lowest performing in terms of grades last year," said Deputy Superintendent and incoming Superintendent Karen Clarke. "We set some very aggressive academic goals for all schools last year and implemented a number of strategies to help them meet those goals. It's good to see the results trending in the right direction."

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