



Arizona State Board of Education

1700 W. Washington Street
Executive Tower, Suite 300
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
Phone: (602) 542-5057
Website: azsbe.az.gov



State Board of Education

Policies and Procedures for Appealing 2021-2022 A-F Letter Grades

*The A-F Appeals Committee is scheduled to meet the week of November 28, 2022 to review appeals.
Please read each section carefully prior to submitting an appeal application.*

1. Timing of submission:

- a. The period to file an appeal begins the day letter grades are released and ends November 15th at 5:00 P.M.
- b. Letter grades issued under appeal will be designated as “Under Review” after the appeal period closes and will remain in place until the appeal is resolved by the Board.
- c. All appeals and supporting documentation must be submitted to “SBE Letter Grade Appeal Application” Google form (<https://forms.gle/r7jVPbBUVz6hMZsP7>) during the period indicated above. It is highly recommended that you request a copy to be sent to your email or print the page to PDF from the Google Form.

2. Notification of receipt:

- a. Applicants submitting an appeal will be automatically notified by email immediately after submitting the appeal by the Google Form.
- b. If an applicant does not receive a notification, the applicant shall contact inbox@azsbe.az.gov.

3. Format of submission:

- a. Schools and local education agencies (LEAs) seeking to appeal a letter grade must use the designated “SBE Letter Grade Appeal Application” Google form (<https://forms.gle/r7jVPbBUVz6hMZsP7>). A copy of the questions in the form is provided at the end of this document.
- b. Schools and LEAs may request either an expedited appeal (document review only) or a non-expedited appeal (document review and appearance before the Committee).

Non-Expedited Appeal:

1. Appearances before the Committee will be limited to fifteen minutes unless the grounds for the appeal is non-substantive as provided for in paragraph 9.
2. Schools may only present on the information and materials provided in the appeal application and **shall not** provide additional information or materials outside of the information originally submitted with the appeal.



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4. Incomplete and inappropriate applications:

Incomplete applications **will not** be reviewed and **will be denied** without further review. A complete application includes supporting documentation.

5. Grounds for appeal are limited to:

- a. Environmental Issues or Events
- b. Adverse Testing Conditions
- c. School or Community Emergency
- d. School Tragedy
- e. Other similar substantive events
- f. Incorrect data (see paragraph 10)

In the 2021-2022 school year, the COVID-19 pandemic affected schools by various degrees.

While COVID-19 was a universal factor for schools across the state, the State Board of Education (Board) recognizes that individual schools may have experienced substantial events beyond the “normal” impacts. While an appeal based solely on COVID-19 may not be granted an appeal, in instances of unanticipated factors, such as Tribal regulations and county health orders, the Board, with appropriate documentation to support a significant data and letter grade impact, may consider the pandemic induced instance in the school’s appeal.

6. The Committee will consider whether the grounds for appeal were:

- a. Unrelated to school/student performance
- b. Outside the school’s control
- c. Timing reasonably related to student performance
- d. Substantial cause of overall school performance

In addition, the Committee will consider whether the school took reasonable steps to minimize the impact of the event on assessment outcomes or if the opportunity did not exist for the school/LEA to minimize impact on students.

It is required that the appealing entity supply evidentiary documents within the initial “SBE Letter Grade Appeal Application” Google form (<https://forms.gle/r7jVPbBUVz6hMZsP7>) to address the Committee’s consideration.

The Committee will consider all submitted longitudinal school-level and student-level data if applicable and relevant.



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7. Schools and LEAs shall redact all personally identifiable student information and any other information that is confidential or private in nature. Applications that contain information of this type will be immediately discarded and will be denied without further review.

8. Supporting evidence for the appeal:

Supporting evidence must be submitted at the time of the initial Google Forms appeal application in order to be considered by the Committee.

a. Supporting evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- i. benchmark assessment data showing an upward trend until the substantive event;
- ii. media reports conferring the reason for appeal, or additional narrative from stakeholders.

b. Examples and possible supporting evidence:

i. Example A and Possible Evidence

At the beginning of the school year, the main road into town is washed out and must undergo months of repair, impacting transportation to and from school by about an hour each way. The school sees a significant decline in attendance rates, as well as instructional time, due to an additional two hours of commuting time for many students.

Prior year proficiency rates were significantly higher than the current year rates with no substantial changes in staffing or administration. The school also provides attendance data to support the decreased instructional time beyond their control.

ii. Example B and Possible Evidence

A fatal car accident on the second morning of AASA testing at an elementary school prohibited students from being dropped off on time to start testing. Students who witnessed the accident or the presence of emergency responders requested counseling. Many tests were unfinished and not scored, which decreased test participation. While the school earned a "B" in the past two accountability years, it received a "C" and many of their younger students performed lower than expected.

The school submits written and signed accounts of the incident by parents and teachers. The school also submits a police report verifying the date and time of the accident which impacted students' performance on the day of testing. The school submits benchmark assessment data to indicate that these same students scored much better on district-wide standardized assessments prior to the incident.



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iii. Example C and Possible Evidence:

In school district ABC, school XYZ is located on tribal land, resulting in the XYZ administration and student population being required to follow Tribal regulations in addition to state and local policies. Because of this unique circumstance, school XYZ was required to eliminate any in person testing schedules with short notice in the spring of 2021 to meet Tribal regulation requirements.

Due to Tribal regulations on in-person limits, students' learning environments were impacted, resulting in elimination of in-person testing schedules, limited in-person learning and no transportation. The school had to provide instruction virtually and dealt with additional hurdles of limited student access to reliable broadband, to which students were not able to prepare for the statewide assessment and were not able to take the assessment in-person; thereby at all. Therefore, the school administration has reported historical data loss due to this unexpected challenge that was completely beyond the control of the school.

9. Non-substantive events:

The Committee **will not** evaluate appeals and will not provide time for an appearance before the Committee based on conditions including, but not limited to:

- a. Opposition to accountability formula (e.g. Growth should not be weighted as such; non-FAY students who pass AASA should be counted, etc.)
- b. Demographic make-up of student population (e.g. School has an above average percentage of ELL students)
- c. Individual student characteristics (e.g. a student was often tardy or absent from his Math and Reading classes)
- d. Incorrect data that does not impact the school's letter grade (e.g. Three students' assessment data is missing from the proficiency indicator, yet if their data is added to the file, the school would still have received a "B" letter grade)
- e. The inclusion of College and Career Readiness Index (CCRI) data that was provided or completed after the CCRI submission deadline.
- f. Incorrect data in the graduation rate that is three or more fiscal years old (FY 20 or older)
- g. Incorrect data cited in a previous appeal that was not corrected through a 15-915 form (i.e. appeal citing incorrect data was approved by SBE in FY19 but school did not submit and correct the incorrect data with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and is citing the same/similar data in an appeal in FY22)



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- h. Approved Online Instruction (AOI) schools approved for alternative status are to be graded on alternative status, not AOI status. Thus, they cannot appeal to be graded as an AOI.
- i. Given an adopted Instructional Time Model for FY22, schools that exceed the 50% threshold of total instructional time provided through remote instruction may not appeal.

10. Incorrect data appeals:

Schools that cite incorrect data as the basis for the appeal shall be subject to the following if the appeal is granted by the Board:

- a. If the incorrect data is related to CCRI, ADE shall place the school into the CCRI audit for the subsequent school year's letter grades.
- b. If directed by the Board, the school shall file a 15-915 form with ADE School Finance to correct the data.
- c. A school shall attend a mandatory data training workshop held by ADE. Additionally, schools are required to sign an attestation by ADE that states the school did not check data appropriately but will in future years.

11. Public Records:

Appeal applications are considered public records, including committee presentations of non-expedited appeals.

12. Rubric:

The same rubric will be used to evaluate all appeals.

13. The Committee recommendations will go to the Board for final action at the December 9, 2022 Board meeting. Following the adjournment of the December 9, 2022 meeting, the accountability file will be updated to reflect the Board's actions. Only the letter grade is updated if approved by the Board; no updates to component data or percentage earned in the public file are made.