

State Board of Education Policies and Process for Appealing A-F Letter Grades

1. Timing of submission: Appeals of final A-F letter grades must be submitted during the embargo period. Letter grades issued under appeal will be designated as pending which will remain in place until the appeal is resolved. All appeals and supporting documentation must be submitted by 5:00pm on the last Friday of the embargo period to inbox@azsbe.az.gov
2. Notification of receipt: Applicants submitting an appeal will be notified via email from the Board within 72 hours of the application that all materials were successfully submitted. If an applicant does not receive notification, contact inbox@azsbe.az.gov and resubmit with a copy of a date-stamped email of the original submission.
3. Format of submission: Schools and LEAs seeking to appeal a letter grade must use the designated SBE Letter Grade Application form. Schools and LEAs may request either an expedited appeal (document review only) or a non-expedited appeal (document review and appearance before the Committee). Appearances before the Committee will be limited to fifteen minutes.
4. Supporting evidence: Supporting evidence for the appeal must be submitted with the application to be considered by the Committee. Supporting evidence may include, but is not limited to, benchmark assessment data showing an upward trend until the substantive event, a longitudinal demonstration of decreased instructional time due to attendance (ADM/ADA), media reports conferring the reason for appeal, or additional narrative from stakeholders.

a. 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 added 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.

b. Example B and Possible Evidence

A fatal car accident on the second morning of AzMERIT 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 has earned a “B” in the past two 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.

5. Grounds for appeal: 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

6. Considerations by the Committee: 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. The Committee will consider all submitted longitudinal school-level and student-level data if applicable and relevant.

7. Non substantive events: The Committee **will not** evaluate appeals based on conditions including, but not limited to:
 - a. Opposition to accountability formulae (e.g. Growth should not be weighted as such; non-FAY students who pass AzMERIT should be counted, etc.).
 - b. Demographic make-up of student population (e.g. School has an above average percentage of ELL students).
 - c. Data within the control of the school/LEA at any point in time (e.g. Test records not corrected via Common Logon, ADE, or Pearson).
 - d. Individual student characteristics (e.g. This student was often tardy or absent from his Math and Reading classes).
 - e. Statistical computations

8. Incomplete applications: Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and will be denied without further review.
9. Public Records: All appeals submitted may be subject to public records requests.
10. Rubric: The same rubric will be used to evaluate all appeals.
11. The Committee will make recommendations to the Board based on its decisions.