

## Public schools adapting to new state reporting system

By Joan Hellyer Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, August 17, 2014 12:15 am

The state's new School Performance Profile is a comprehensive way to determine a school's success, according to a local district administrator.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education implemented the profile reporting system in 2013 to replace the Adequate Yearly Progress definer as called for in the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

The system satisfies a federally approved NCLB waiver and allows schools several years to show incremental academic growth instead of trying to demonstrate by 2015 that all of their students are learning at grade level or above, officials said.

Each school's report is based on a 100-point scale, which takes several factors into consideration, including standardized test results, graduation, attendance and promotion rates and proof showing increased achievement by all students, according to PDE officials.

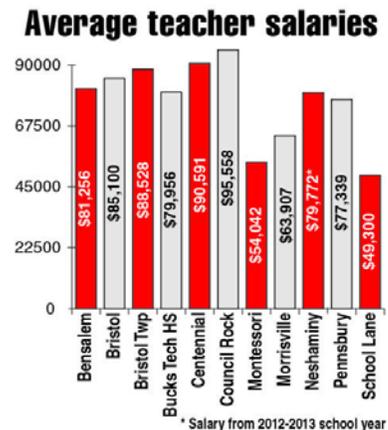
The new system hasn't impacted how local school systems have delivered their education program, officials said.

"The change is simply the way PDE chooses to report our test scores," Council Rock Superintendent Mark Klein said.

The majority of public schools and publicly funded charter schools in Lower Bucks County earned a passing grade in the initial year of the system by scoring at or above the 70 percent threshold, according to education department statistics.

Andrea DiDio, spokeswoman for the Centennial School District, said there are benefits to the new school reporting system because it takes more into account than just test scores.

"While these are important and do provide a basis for measuring success, we also strive to ensure students are ready to enter post-secondary schools, colleges/universities, and the workforce," DiDio said. "The skills students need to be successful in the next phase of their lives are much broader (than just test scores)."



Bucks County Technical High School in Bristol Township has benefited from the new system, Principal Hank DeGeorge said. That's because the state now takes into consideration scores on the industry standards-based competency assessments, known as NOCTI, that each tech school student takes in addition to the state's Keystone Exams.

"We are still working to raise our Keystone scores in math, literature and biology, but we are pleased that the state recognizes the NOCTI assessment in the SPP score," he said.

The new state reporting system also casts a bright spotlight on the achievements at Bucks County Montessori Charter School in Falls, the school principal said.

BCMCS earned a 94.4 percent SPP rating along with a Governor's Award for Excellence in Academics in the initial year of the system's usage.

"This innovative version of measuring schools more closely follows Montessori ideals in its individualized approach and adherence to the processes, as opposed to the products of learning," BCMCS principal Brian Long said.

The principal expects his school to receive a similar score for the 2013-14 school year.

Those scores will be released in mid to late September, according to state education department spokesman Timothy Eller.