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More Students Proficient in Math, Science, But School Grades Down

SALT LAKE CITY – More Utah students gained proficiency in math and science while English language arts proficiency levels held steady, according to results from 2016 Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence (SAGE) annual assessment released by the Utah State Board of Education. However, due to a technicality in the state law governing school grading, fewer Utah schools earned grades of A or B.

[Utah law](#) requires that in an academic year in which 65 percent of schools receive an A or a B grade, the Utah State Board of Education must raise the range of scores for grades by 5 percent. This year 74 percent of Utah elementary schools received an A or B and 66 percent of high schools received an A or B, requiring a recalculation of the grades. With the increase in range scores, 56 percent of elementary schools received an A or B and 43 percent of high schools received an A or B. In 2015, 63 percent of elementary schools earned an A or B and 56 percent of high schools earned an A or B.

“The important thing for parents to look at is whether their children are proficient and whether they are improving year to year,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson. “If your child is proficient in English language arts, math and science, that is good news. When examining your child’s school grade, look to see if more children are becoming proficient year by year. If so, that is a good indicator that the school is moving in the right direction.”

In 2016, Utah students held steady from the previous year with 44 percent proficient in English language arts. Math proficiency rose from 45 to 47 percent and science proficiency from 47 to 49 percent.

Those interested in finding individual school, district or statewide data on SAGE results or school grading can find it here: <https://datagateway.schools.utah.gov/>.

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