



## LA CIMA MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Dear Parents:

For the past several years, Arizona public schools have been assigned a label by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) under the AZLEARNS protocol. These labels, such as “Excelling” and “Performing” were sometimes criticized as difficult to understand. In 2010, the Arizona Legislature passed a law requiring the ADE to develop a new labeling protocol for public schools. Starting this school year, schools will receive letter grade labels, A through F.

The A through F labels generally operate in the same manner as grades you would be accustomed to in a child’s report card and have the following specific meanings:

- “A” schools demonstrate an *excellent* level of performance.
- “B” schools demonstrate an *above average* level of performance.
- “C” schools demonstrate an *average* level of performance.
- “D” schools demonstrate a *below average* level of performance.
- “F” schools are those that rank as “D” schools for three consecutive years.

There are many factors that go into the determination of a school’s new A through F label, through use of a formula developed by the ADE. Significant factors under the formula include the number of students who pass the AIMS each year and the academic growth which students experience. Other factors considered include a school’s graduation rate, dropout rate, and the rate at which English language learners become proficient.

While this letter cannot possibly explain all the intricacies of the formula, it may help to know that not all factors will apply at all schools due to the nature of the data involved. For example, only data for students in grades 2 through 10 will be used in ADE’s calculations of the school labels.

As we transition from the previous labeling protocol to this new one, please understand that the new labels may not always seem linear to the previous ones. For example, a school that is “Excelling” under the previous labeling system could be labeled as a “B” school under the new system. Thus, it is always important to bear in mind that any single indicator of school performance is just that – one indicator. As always, within our District, we will ensure that these new school labels, like other outcome measures, help to inform and guide improvements that we know should consistently and constantly be pursued in any school.

If you have any questions about this new label system or how it may affect our school, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Christine Sullivan  
Principal