

Partnering with Learning Heroes to Create School Report Cards That Meet Parents Where They Are With Information They Can Use

Mission

HCM has the privilege of working for and partnering with Learning Heroes on an ongoing, unprecedented body of research on parent mindsets and education. Learning Heroes is a leading education non-profit focused on equipping parents to support their child's success in school and to helping state education agencies, school districts and advocacy organizations in meeting parents where they are. The research consistently shows a gaping disconnect between parents' perception of their children's academic performance and actual student achievement — with 90 percent believing their child is performing at or above grade level as opposed to the 38 percent proficiency identified by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This disconnect is partially due to lack of access to information parents want and need to be effective educational advocates for their children. School report cards, a primary source of objective information on school performance, are most often difficult to decipher and even harder to locate online. Without careful planning to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which requires even more data to be reported, the situation could become worse instead of better. HCM Strategists supported Learning Heroes in a partnership with Tembo to develop an ESSA-compliant, parent-friendly [school report card model](#).

Action

In partnership with Learning Heroes and Edge Research, HCM developed and executed qualitative and quantitative research in five states to determine parent perceptions and priorities regarding school performance data and to identify effective, evidence-based messaging around school performance. Informed by feedback from a diverse mix of parents through focus groups, in-depth interviews and surveys led by Edge, HCM and Tembo designed a model school report card that reflected the information, context, language and format that parents said they most valued. The research also yielded important insights on how to maximize the report card's impact as an intuitive tool for parents seeking to understand school performance, and what messages most resonated with them. HCM continues to present and raise awareness of the [school report card model](#) to education organizations representing states, school leaders, parents and other key stakeholders.

Impact

HCM and Learning Heroes are working across multiple states, including South Dakota, Texas, New Mexico, and Massachusetts to develop a parent-friendly school report card, and directly with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to provide technical assistance to states based on our research. Several other states have begun work to customize our model school report card to match their unique accountability system. There is a growing recognition that school report cards are not just an exercise in compliance, but rather an opportunity to meaningfully inform and engage parents. HCM and Learning Heroes are committed to working with these states to realize this opportunity. As more states rethink their approach to parent communication and offer clear, actionable school performance information, parents will be better equipped to make the best decisions they can to support their children's education. HCM is proud to have supported Learning Heroes and the field with this critical work.