PAYSON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

A–F Letter Grades 2025–2026

Results, strengths, and Comprehensive Needs Assessment

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Assistant Superintendent of Academic and Special Services · Governing Board Meeting



DISTRICT (LEA) LETTER GRADE

PUSD earned a B for the fourth consecutive year

B (Highly Performing): high performance on the statewide assessment and/or significant student growth and/or higher four-year graduation rates and/or moving students to proficiency at a higher rate than the state average.

Source: Arizona Department of Education, FY26 A–F Public File (released 10/27/2026)

2025–2026 school grades at a glance

Payson High School

B 72.36 points

B or higher every year since 2021–22, including two A years

Rim Country Middle School

B 74.00 points

A B for four straight years, up from a C before the pandemic

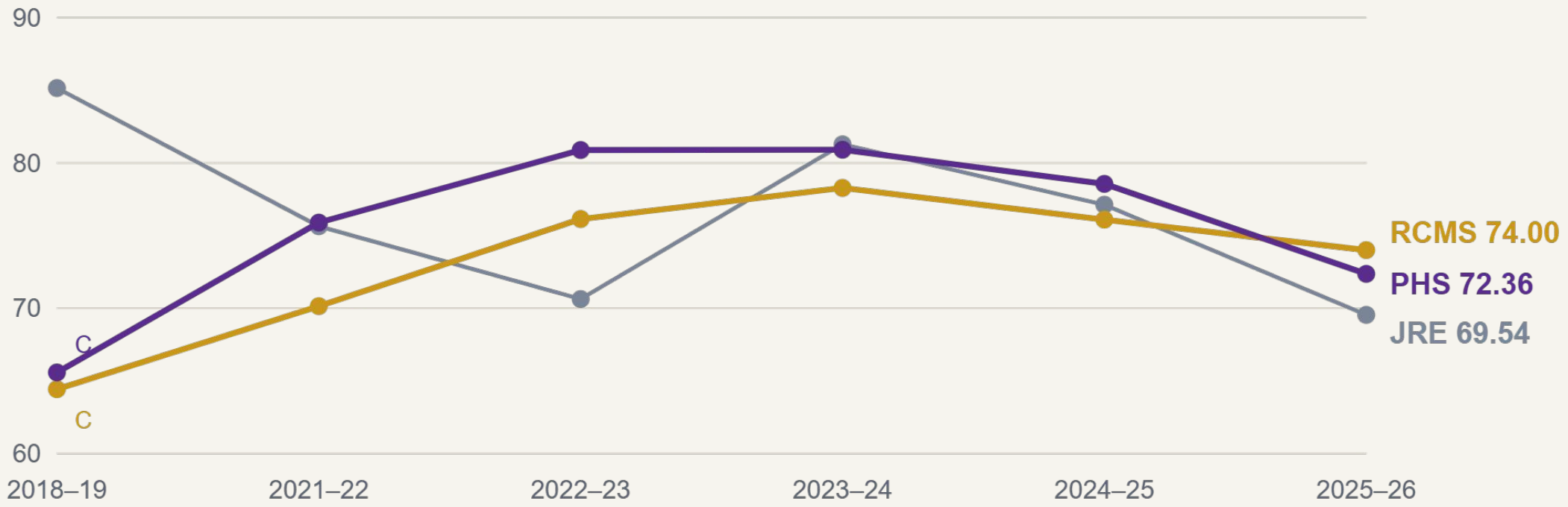
Julia Randall Elementary

C 69.54 points

2.46 points from a B; earned a B in two of the last three years

Source: Arizona Department of Education, FY26 A–F Public File (released 10/27/2026)

RCMS and PHS moved from C to B or better after the pandemic and have held it



Points earned each year. Cut scores differ by model and year; no grades were issued for 2019–20 or 2020–21.

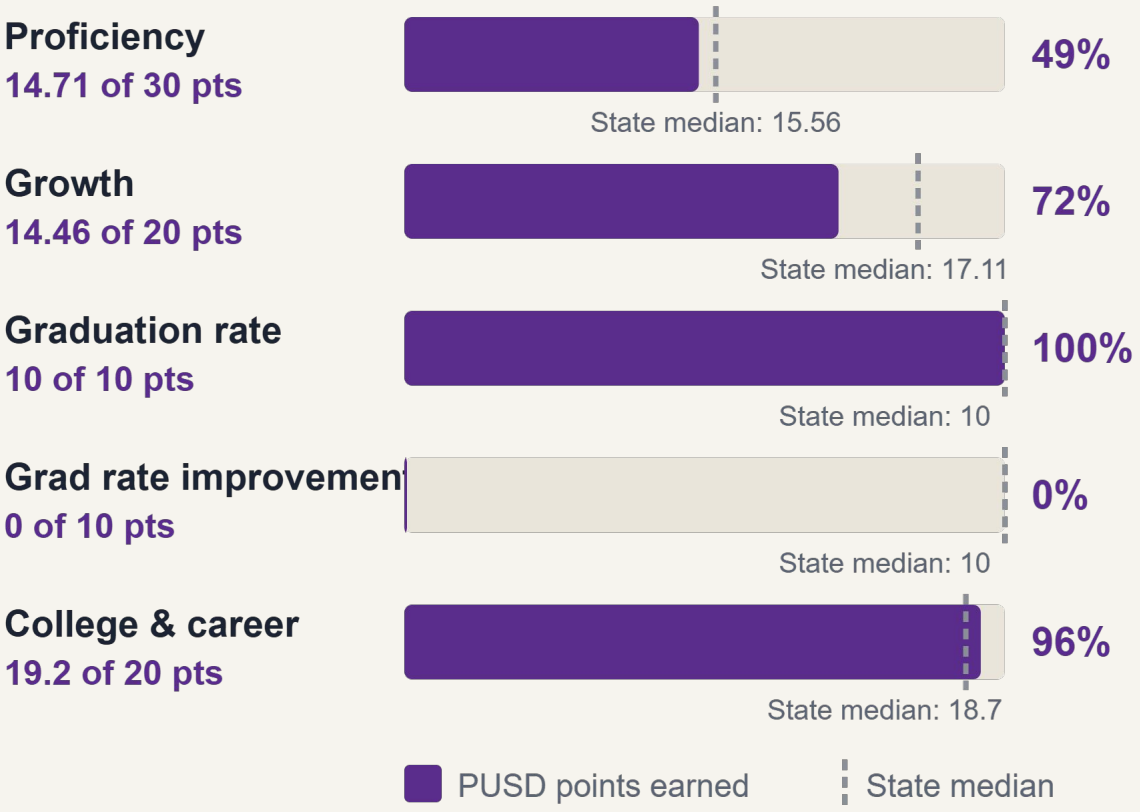
Sources: PUSD Letter Grades history; ADE FY26 A–F Public File

COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT and A-F Letter Grades

Strengths and Areas of Focus

For each school: proficiency compared with schools of similar poverty, then FY26 A–F component scores compared with the state median

Payson High School: full graduation points and strong career readiness



Strengths

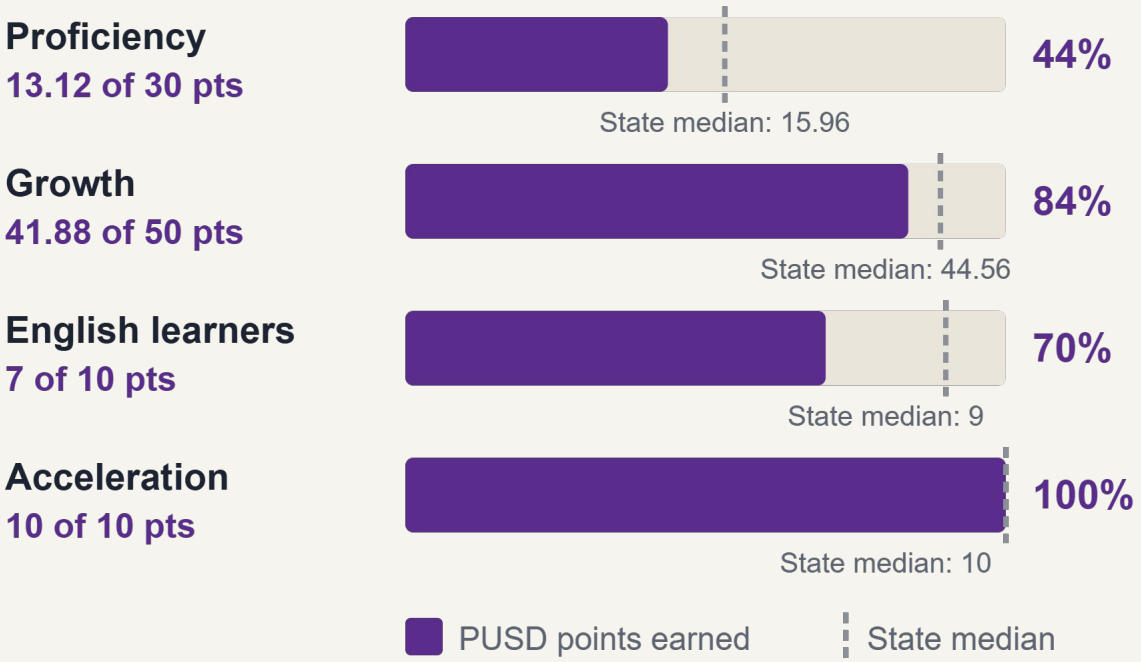
- Full 10 of 10 graduation-rate points
- College & career readiness up from 17.5 to 19.2 of 20, above the state median
- Proficiency within a point of the state median

Focus areas

- Student growth: 14.46 of 20 (16.27 last year)
- Four-year graduation rate improvement: 0 of 10 points

Sources: ADE FY26 A–F Public File (state medians, same model); ADE FY25 A–F Public File (prior-year comparisons)

Rim Country Middle School: full acceleration points and a B four years running



Sources: ADE FY26 A–F Public File (state medians, same model); ADE FY25 A–F Public File (prior-year comparisons)

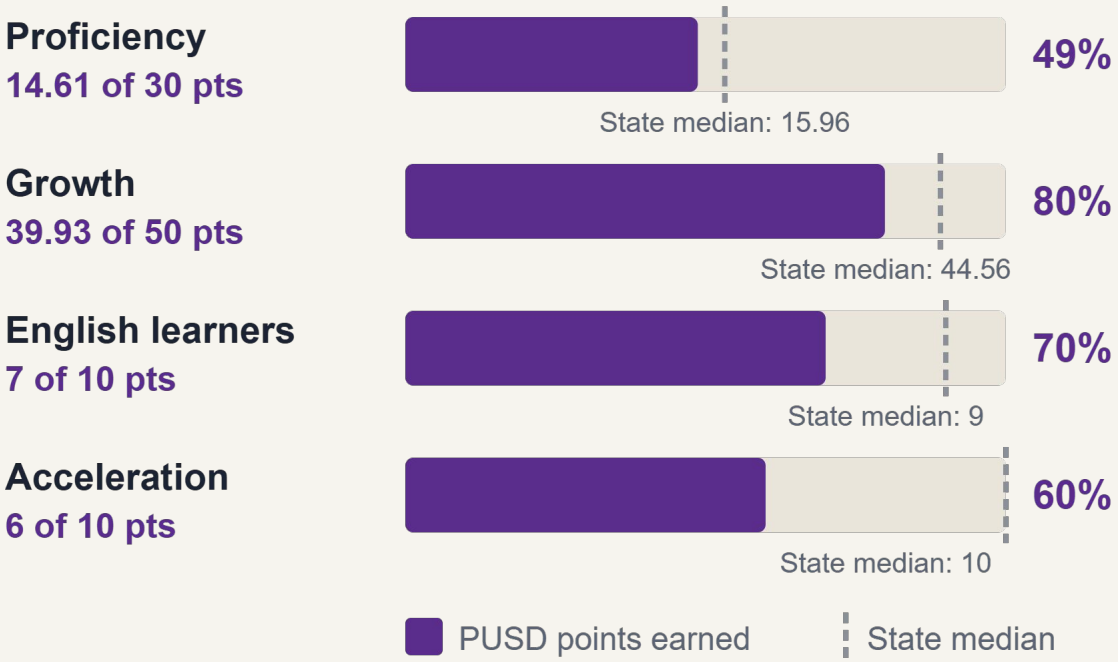
Strengths

- All 10 acceleration points again: 8th grade math gains and math improvement for 7 student groups
- Growth: 84% of possible points, half of the K–8 grade
- Proficiency up from 12.29 to 13.12 points over last year

Focus areas

- Proficiency: 2.8 points below the state median
- English learner points: 7 of 10

Julia Randall Elementary: proficiency near the state, 2.46 points from a B



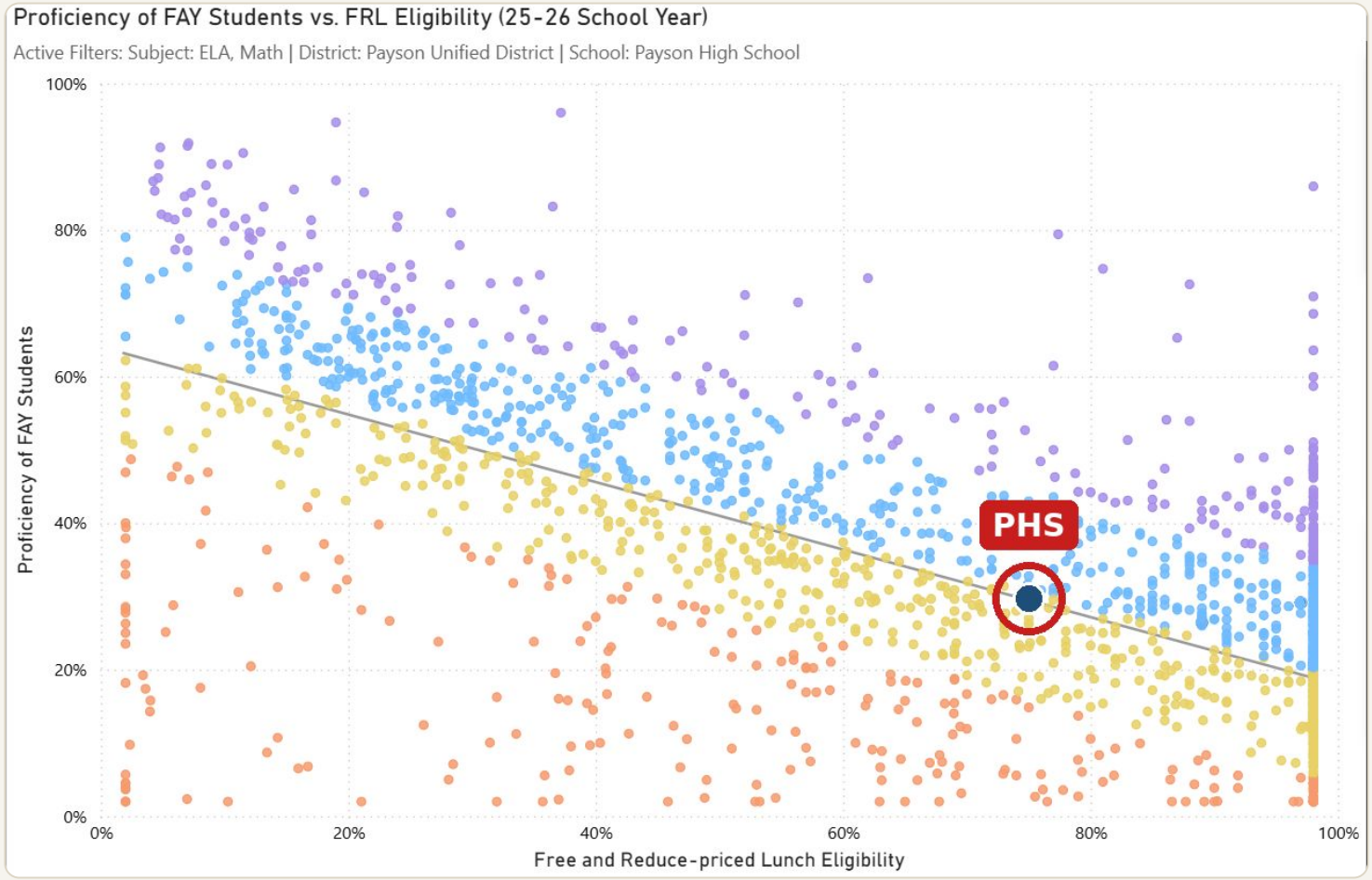
Strengths

- Proficiency above the state trend for its poverty level (CNA graph)
- Proficiency within 1.4 points of the state median
- Growth: 80% of possible points

Focus areas

- 2.46 points from a B
- Acceleration: 6 of 10 (8 last year); no points for 3rd grade ELA or chronic absence
- English learners: 7 of 10 (10 last year)
- Student growth: 39.93 of 50 (41.84 last year)

PHS scores on the state trend line



What it shows

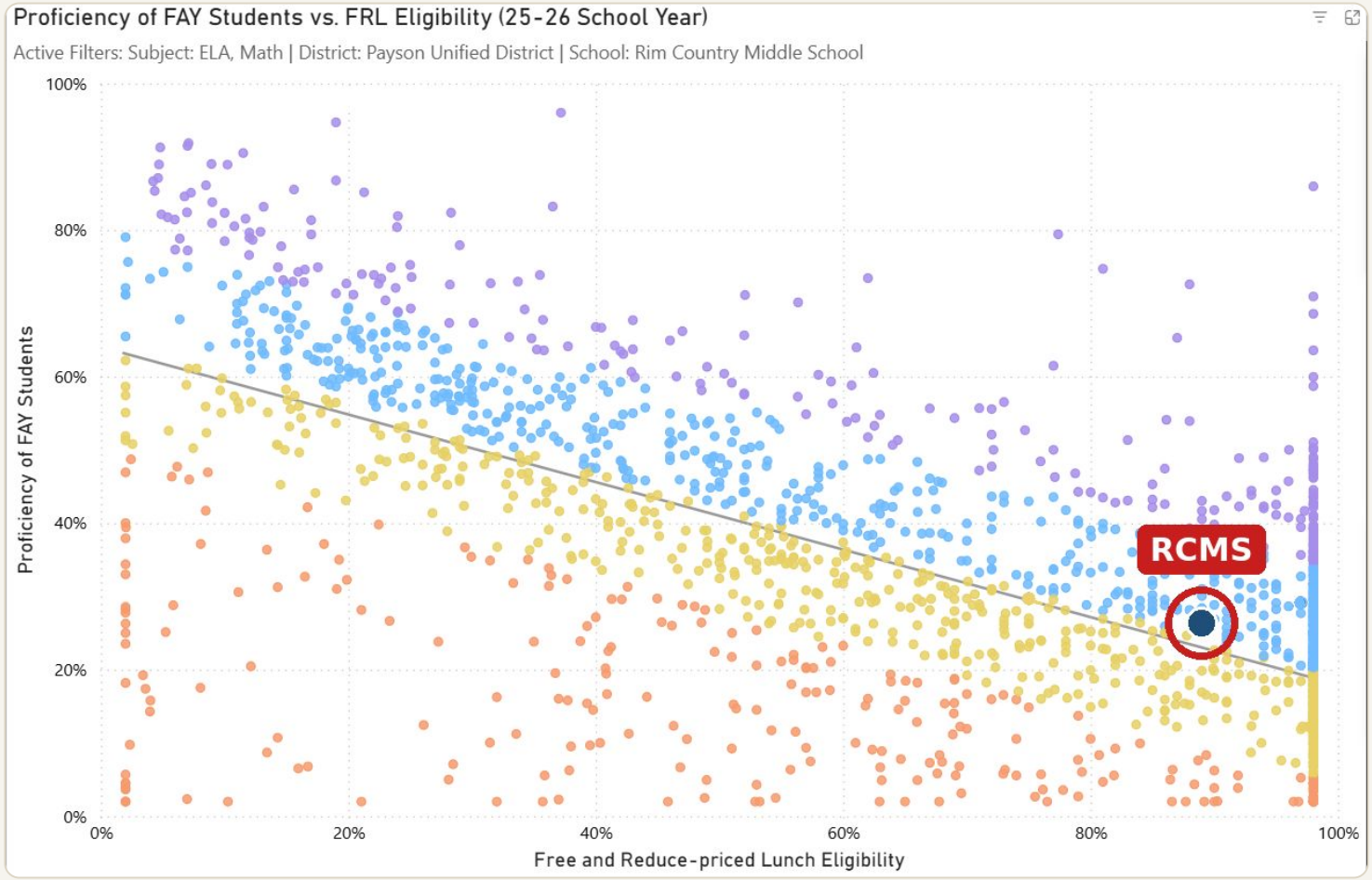
About three in four PHS students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. PHS proficiency matches what the state trend predicts for schools with that level of need.

How to read it

Each dot is an Arizona school. Left to right: share of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Bottom to top: ELA and math proficiency. The gray line is what schools at each poverty level typically score. Dots above it beat that expectation.

Source: ADE Comprehensive Needs Assessment graphs, 2025–26 school year (ELA and math, FAY students); statewide average proficiency 38.95%

RCMS moved above the state trend line



What it shows

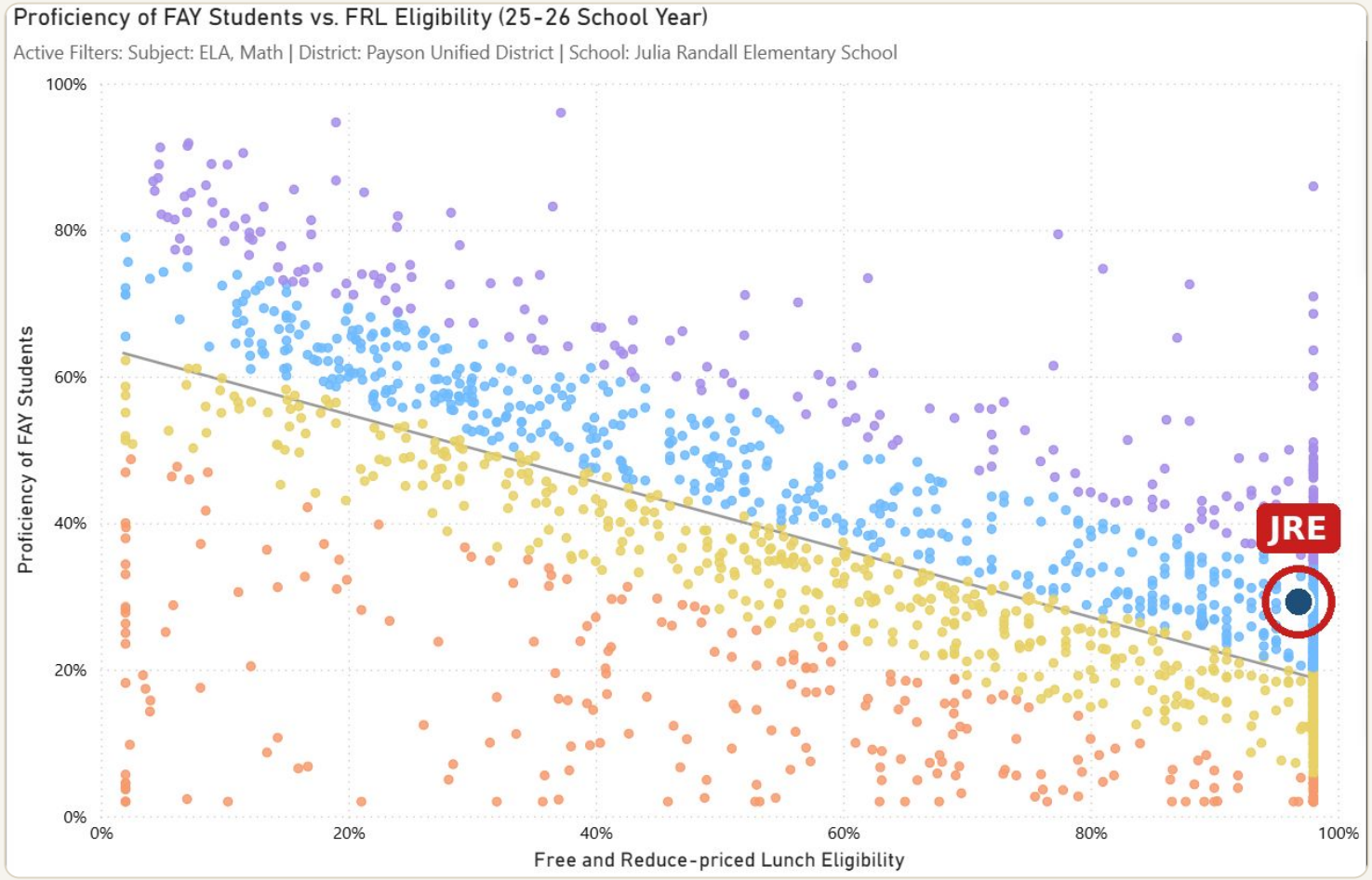
Nearly nine in ten RCMS students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and RCMS now outperforms most schools with similar need. Last year it sat on the line.

How to read it

Each dot is an Arizona school. Left to right: share of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Bottom to top: ELA and math proficiency. The gray line is what schools at each poverty level typically score. Dots above it beat that expectation.

Source: ADE Comprehensive Needs Assessment graphs, 2025–26 school year (ELA and math, FAY students); statewide average proficiency 38.95%

JRE scores well above the state trend line



What it shows

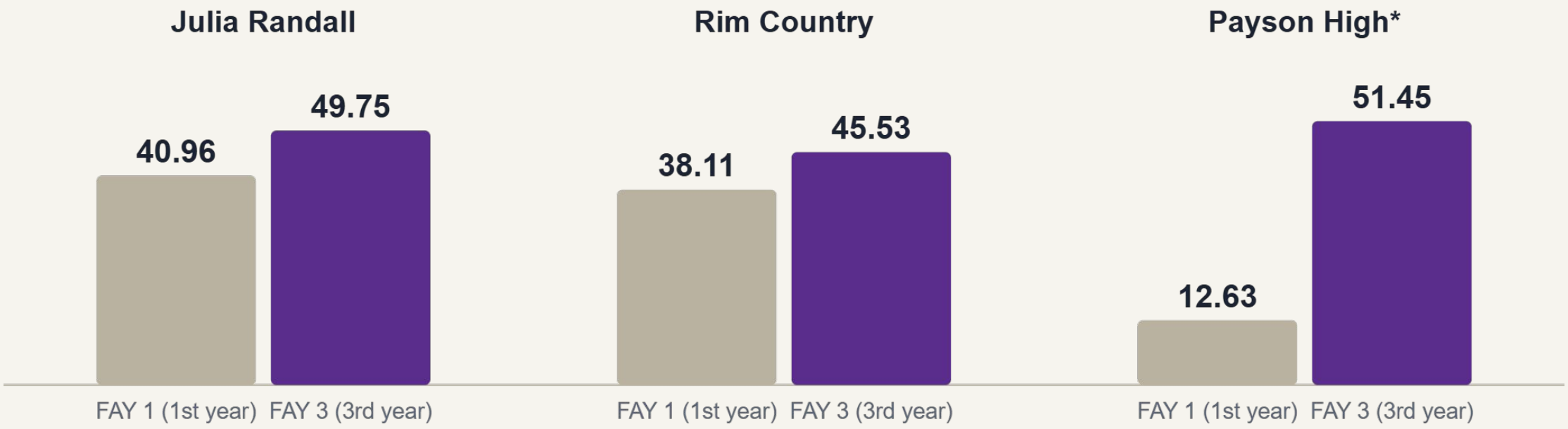
JRE serves one of the highest-need populations in the state and outperforms most schools with similar need for the second year in a row.

How to read it

Each dot is an Arizona school. Left to right: share of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Bottom to top: ELA and math proficiency. The gray line is what schools at each poverty level typically score. Dots above it beat that expectation.

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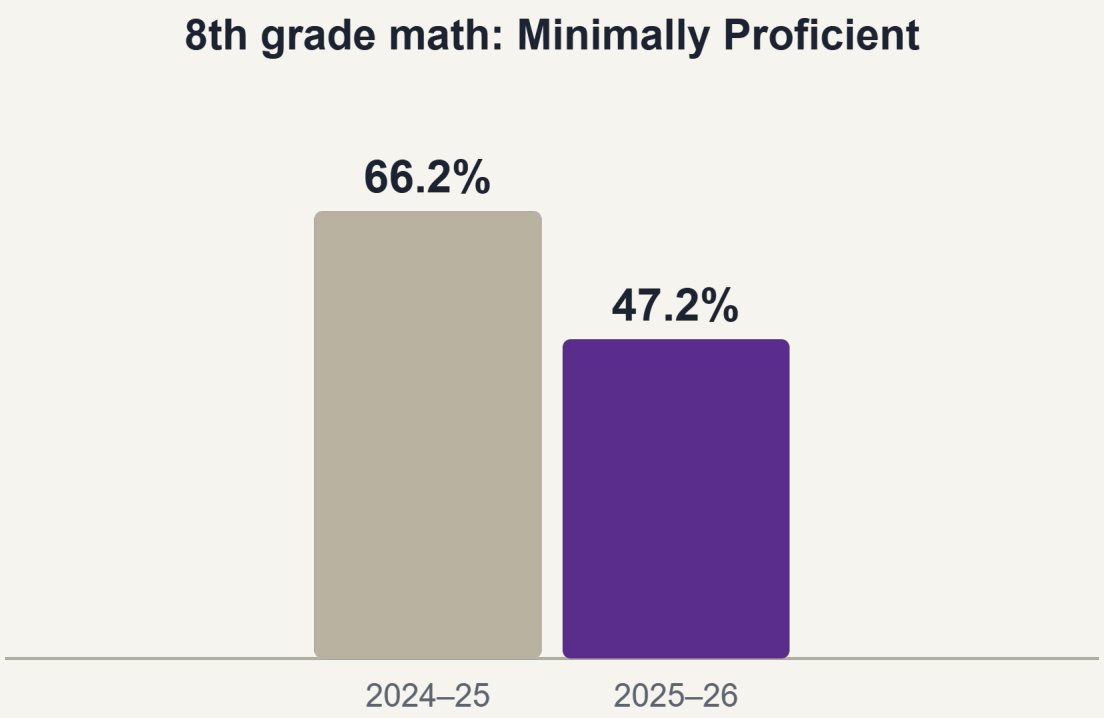
Bright spot: the longer students are at a PUSD school, the higher they score



ADE FAY-weighted proficiency score (ELA and math). Percent proficient: JRE 24.9% → 31.2%, RCMS 24.3% → 29.2%, PHS 0% → 32.2%. *ADE does not report FAY for high schools; PUSD calculated PHS with ADE's method from the A–F student file. PHS FAY 1 is about 10 juniors.

Sources: ADE FY2026 A–F Category Summaries (JRE, RCMS); ADE FY2026 A–F student static file (PHS)

Bright spot: RCMS math is moving in the right direction



19 points fewer 8th graders at the lowest level in math.

23.52 / 25

math growth points at RCMS (94%), the strongest growth result in the district

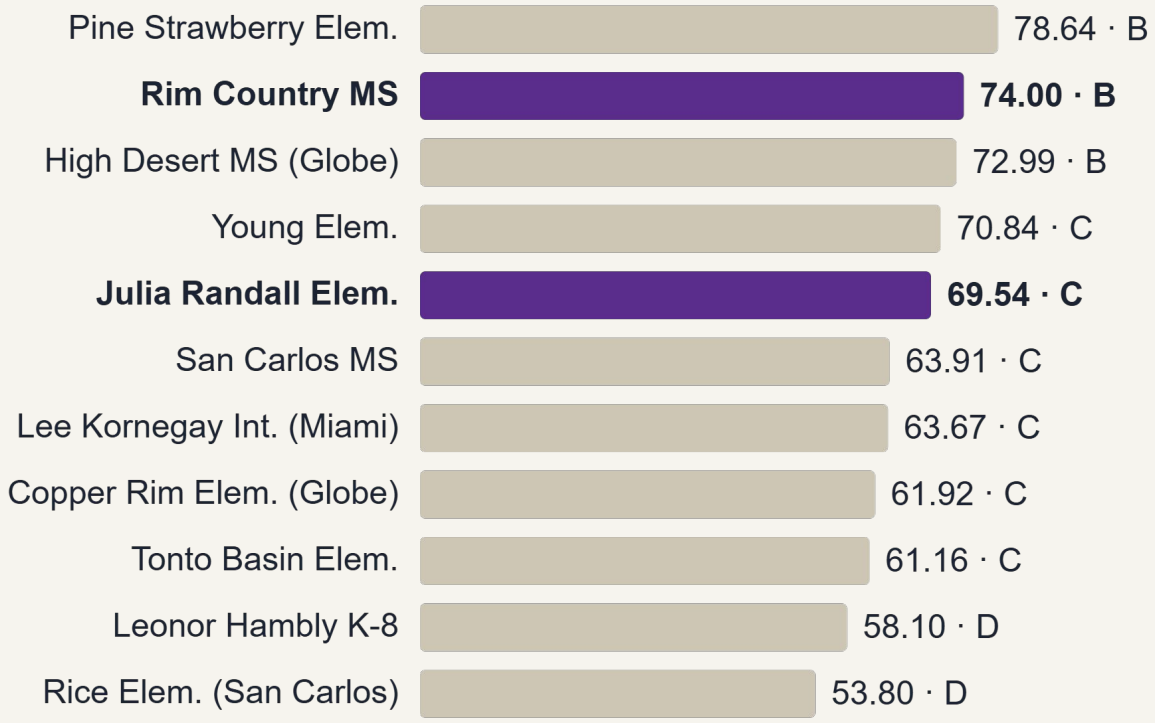
10 / 10

acceleration points: 8th grade math gains (5 pts) plus math improvement for 7 student groups

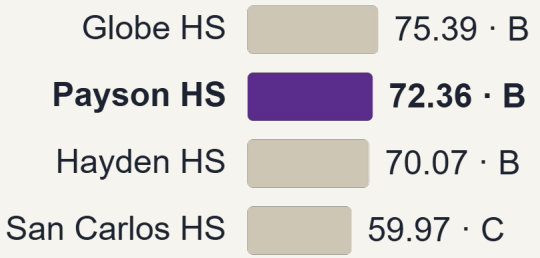
Source: ADE FY2026 A–F K–8 Category Summary and Acceleration/Readiness files (school 4856); FY25 A–F Public File

Among Gila County district schools, RCMS and PHS rank second

K–8 schools (points earned · letter grade)



High schools (points · grade)

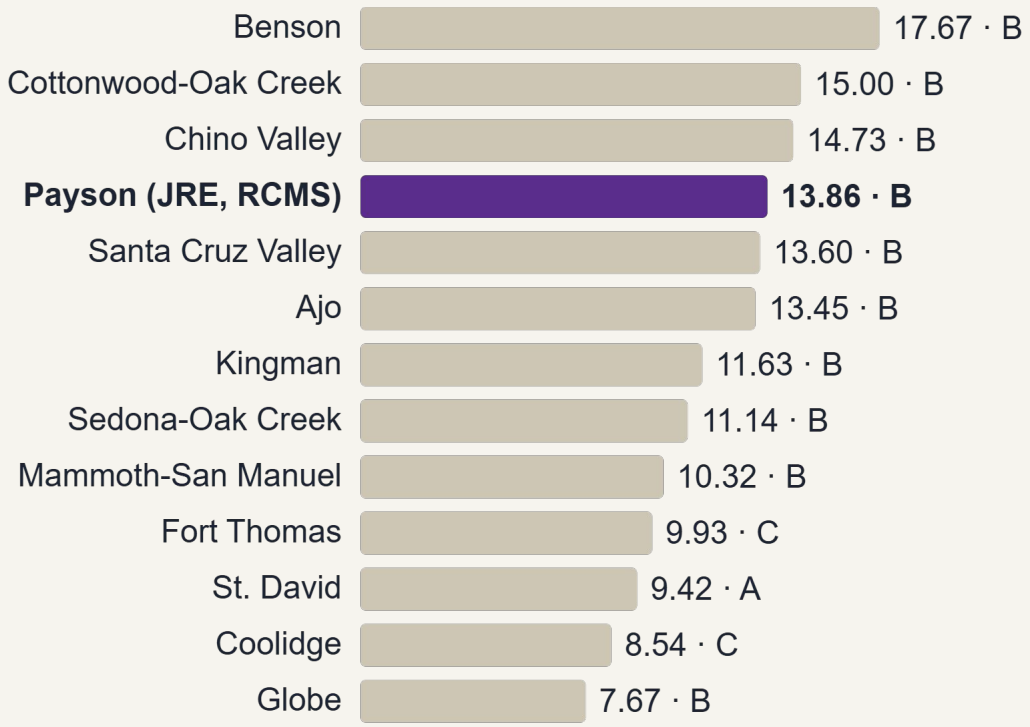


Both PUSD K–8 schools score in the top half of the 11 district K–8 schools in Gila County.

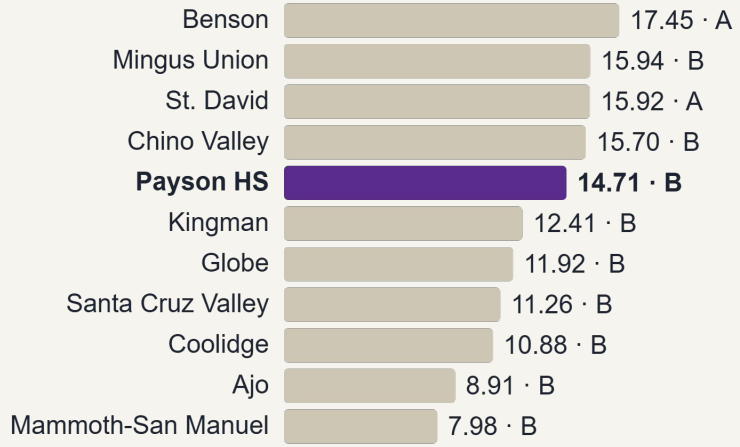
Source: ADE FY26 A–F Public File; traditional district schools only (charter schools excluded)

Among our Auditor General peers, PUSD proficiency ranks in the top half

K–8: 4th of 13 (district grade)



High school: 5th of 11 (school grade)



Who is in our peer group

Unified districts in towns and rural areas with 16–23% poverty. The Auditor General groups districts this way because poverty, district type and location are tied to achievement. Only 3 of our 13 peers have a higher Census child poverty rate than PUSD (21%). That rate is a U.S. Census estimate of school-age children in poverty within district boundaries, a different measure from free and reduced-price lunch eligibility.

Sources: ADE FY26 A–F Public File; Arizona Auditor General student achievement peer group 4 and poverty rates (FY 2023 data file). A–F proficiency points of 30.

Statewide, PUSD proficiency sits within three points of the median

A–F proficiency points, out of 30

School	PUSD	State median	Points below median	Statewide percentile
Julia Randall Elementary	14.61	15.96 (K–8)	1.35	42nd
Rim Country Middle School	13.12	15.96 (K–8)	2.84	32nd
Payson High School	14.71	15.56 (9–12)	0.85	44th

The statewide median includes many schools with far fewer low-income students. Compared with schools of similar need, JRE and RCMS score above the state trend line and PHS scores on it.

Source: ADE FY26 A–F Public File; medians and percentiles among traditional schools using the same model (1,338 K–8; 229 high schools)

What changes for 2026–27 letter grades

1

No more bonus points

The Board voted unanimously to remove them. ADE estimates about 1 in 10 schools could drop a letter grade.

Aug 24, 2026

Bonus points eliminated

2

A higher bar for top grades

New cut scores for proficiency, growth, EL, graduation, college and career readiness, and acceleration. ADE estimates up to 50 high schools could lose an A.

Oct 26, 2026

New cut scores approved

3

A grade for every indicator

Each school will get a letter grade for each indicator, plus an overall grade.

Dec 7, 2026

Board may revise indicator weights

4

More decisions ahead

Proficiency and growth changes are adopted for one year. Indicator weights and the former bonus measures are still under review.

Oct 2027

First grades under the new system

Questions & comments

Go Longhorns