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## Schools rated higher by state than feds

*Education chief claims Arizona label is fairer*

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Call Creighton Elementary School in Phoenix and the receptionist answers proudly, "We are a performing school!"

For the third year running, the urban school has earned a ranking of "performing" in the annual review of public schools by the state Department of Education. The school just missed the cutoff for the next-highest rating.

It's welcome news. Earlier this month, Creighton was listed as failing to meet adequate yearly progress under the federal No Child Left Behind legislation.

"Our kids are growing, but not fast enough for NCLB," Principal Rosemary Agneessens said.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne encourages schools and parents to focus on the new state labels instead of federal ones. He says the state labels present a more accurate profile of schools' performances.

By state standards, all 10 of the city's regular high schools earned ratings of "performing plus," but only three - Cesar Chavez High, Camelback High and Cyber High - made adequate yearly progress by federal standards.

"The labels are a validation that academically we are heading in the right direction," said Art Lebowitz, assistant superintendent in the Phoenix Union High School District. "We are very proud of our students' achievement and the work that our teachers and staff are doing."

The labels were released Wednesday.

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