

Frequently Asked Questions about Traditional and Standards Based Report Cards

This document provides some answers to general and specific standards based grading questions.

During the 2013-2014 school year, Rockingham County Schools implemented Standards Based Reporting in Kindergarten and First Grade.

Purpose of Standards Based Report Cards

- To clarify grade level standards
- To clearly communicate student progress and achievement toward grade level standards
- To support parents in understanding strengths and areas of need
- To better communicate and provide feedback

Standards Based grades measure how well an individual student is doing in relation to grade level standards, not in regard to non-academic tasks (turning in homework, behavior, etc. which is reported separately) nor by comparing the individual's work with other students.

Definitions

Academic Standards – These are priority standards that are taught and assessed during the school year for each content standard.

Progression Standards – These are standards students must learn in order to meet the priority standard reported on the report card. Progression Standards are not reported specifically on the report card, but are included in the pacing guide and determine if a student is making acceptable progress toward the priority standard(s) with which they are aligned.

Learner Behavior Standards – When met, these are behaviors that positively impact student learning. These standards assist parents and students in understanding student behavior.

Marking Guide – This guide is used to assign a number between 1- 4 for Academic Standards and 1-3 for Learner Behavior Standards. The number is reported on the report card to indicate a student's current status on a specific standard. This number has a specific meaning and should be reviewed in the context of its meaning rather than the relationship to other numbers.

Academic Marking Guide

- 4- The student has surpassed the grade level standard.
- 3- The student has met the grade level standard.
- 2- The student is making acceptable progress toward the grade level standard.
- 1- The student needs extensive support at school and home to meet the grade level standard.

Not Assessed/Reported This Grading Period

Learner Behavior Marking Guide

- 3 - The student exceeds expectations of the learner behavior established in the classroom.
- 2 – The student meets expectations of the learner behavior established in the classroom.
- 1 – The student needs additional support to meet expectations of the learner behavior established in the classroom.

Not Assessed/Reported This Grading Period – When a grading period box is shaded in beside a standard, this means that Progression Standards nor the Academic Standard was taught and/or assessed that grading period.

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Question	Traditional Report Card	Standards Based Report Card
How are the report cards different?	Grades are given for each subject area, such as communication arts, math, and science. These grades are based on an average of scores for a particular grading period.	Core subject areas are subdivided into a list of priority standards and knowledge that students need to learn or master. Each standard on the list is scored separately based on students' progress toward meeting that standard.
How are grades determined?	Grades reflect an averaging of points collected to determine a letter grade for a subject area. Students' scores are derived from combining practice assignments, teacher observations, projects, and tests. Students receive points based on what they do mixed with what they know. Several non-achievement factors, such as behavior, work ethic, and timeliness, are influencing the grade as well. Grades from one term may be separate from another term.	Grades reflect the level of proficiency on specific standards for each subject area. Students' scores are derived from teacher observations, projects, and tests. Grades focus on the end of the year goals for each grade level. As performance goes up the grades reflect the new level of mastery. Thus, teachers, students, and parents are able to see a student's growth over time.
How do the grades reflect North Carolina's grade level expectations?	Grades reflect teacher's expectations. If the classroom teacher chooses assignments that match the state core curriculum the grades summarize the work completed by the student about the standard. If the teacher does not choose assignments that match the state core then the grades do not summarize the student's progress toward meeting state standards.	Report card levels reflect progress relative to the North Carolina's expectations for students to meet grade level standards. Students who are learning the skills leading up to a standard show adequate progress and should be able to meet the priority standard before the end of the school year.

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<p>What is the advantage to each type of grading system?</p>	<p>Most adults are familiar this type of grading system from their experiences as students.</p>	<p>Report card performance levels are based on the level of achievement the student attained at the end of the teaching cycle for each standard.</p> <p>Other factors that would be misleading (behavior, assignments not aligned with grade level standards, etc.) are not included in the academic performance levels.</p> <p>Parents can see which standards students have mastered and which ones they need more work on in larger content areas such as English Language Arts and Mathematics.</p> <p>Creates more consistent curriculum between teachers on the same grade level.</p> <p>Homework completion is reported separately from mastery of concepts and skills.</p> <p>Work habits and effort are reported separately.</p>
<p>What are the disadvantages to each type of grading system?</p>	<p>Students are being scored on assignments before they have had sufficient practice to expect mastery.</p> <p>The grade summarizing a content area such as reading or math doesn't tell the parent which standards the child knows or standards the child is still working toward mastery.</p>	<p>Change takes time to build understanding in everyone involved.</p>