

Elementary Progress Report Q&A

Learning is a process and it should be expected that repeated opportunities are necessary to master new skills and understand new concepts. The following information printed on each progress report, as well as the Q&A that follows, may be helpful to understanding standards-based grading.

SCORING CRITERIA
Score 4: The student consistently demonstrates sophisticated application of the content standard that is well beyond end-of-year grade level expectations.
Score 3.5: The student consistently demonstrates understanding that is above end-of-year grade level expectations.
Score 3: The student consistently demonstrates proficiency on end-of-year expectations. It is expected that all students demonstrate this level of proficiency by the end of the year, however, some students may achieve end-of-year expectations in earlier grading periods.
Score 2.5: The student is approaching end-of-year expectations.
Score 2: The student is not demonstrating proficiency on end-of-year expectations at this time. While this may be an appropriate level in the first or second semester grading period, a "2" received at the end of the year or instruction cycle would indicate that the student is not progressing appropriately.
Score 1.5: The student still needs more time and instruction to achieve end-of-year expectations. A student receiving this score in the first semester may need additional support to achieve end-of-year expectations. The student receiving this score at the end of the year or instruction cycle is well behind end-of-year expectations and may need more intensive support.
Score 1: The student needs a significant level of support to achieve end-of-year expectations. A student receiving this score in any grading period will need more intensive support.
NA: Not covered this semester.

Q: What is standards-based grading?

A: Standards-based grading is a refined way of reporting what students know and how they demonstrate their understanding of the Colorado Academic Standards. Standards-based grading uses a 4-point scale where a "3" is proficient on end-of-year standards. Because student understanding is compared to the end of year expectations, student reports generally show growth in the level of proficiency obtained over the course of the year, thus indicating increased understanding of standards over time. It is typical that most students do not achieve a proficient score on end of year standards before the end of the year. However, teachers monitor student progress on a monthly basis, providing intervention for students who are not making appropriate progress and enrichment for students who demonstrate proficiency earlier than expected. In addition to the proficiency level reporting, teachers will indicate if a student is or is not on track to meet end of year standards at each reporting cycle.

Q: What is the purpose of standards-based grading?

A: The purpose of standards-based grading is to align grading with the Colorado Academic Standards and Common Core State Standards as measured by consistent and accurate student achievement data and common criteria for grading.

Q: How does standards-based grading work?

A: Standards-based grading assesses a student's overall work and their most recent work so that it really tells us what a student has learned and what they now know rather than averaging all of the learning experiences. Standards-based grading measures students' knowledge of grade-level content over time by reporting the most recent, consistent level of performance. So a student might struggle in the beginning of a course with new content, but then learn and demonstrate proficient performance by the end of the course.

Q: Why is Englewood Schools changing to a standards-based progress report?

A: Englewood teachers currently are teaching a standards-based curriculum and assessing students on the standards the students are learning. The current elementary progress report does not allow teachers to report on how students are meeting expected "end of year" exit standards. The move toward a standards-based reporting system that measures progress toward end-of-year benchmarks is happening throughout the United States.

Q: Is standards-based grading widely used?

A: Standards-based report cards are considered a "best practice" in education and there is a rapidly growing body of research that the use of standards-based feedback and grading has a positive effect on student achievement. Standards-based grading and reporting are widely known in established, rigorous academic programs in elementary schools and beyond.

Q: Why Choose a Standards-Based Report Card?

A: At the elementary level, the standards are so fundamental to all future learning that we felt it was important to communicate a child's progress in these key areas. Students who have not yet mastered reading, writing, and math skills by the time they leave the elementary grades are at risk educationally. It is our hope that all children have mastered these skills before they move on in their education thereby increasing their chances for future success. A standards-based progress report is designed to communicate how your child is progressing in each of these areas.

Q: Why not just use grades – A, B, C, D, F?

A: Even though most of us are familiar with grades, they can be very misleading. For example, what does a "C" (75%) indicate about a child's progress? For some students, it might mean they only understood some of the concepts presented, and if that's the case, which skills are lacking? For other students receiving a 'C', they may know and understand the concepts, but put forth very little effort or did not turn in work resulting in a lower grade. To complicate the situation even more, oftentimes work habits or other skills are also considered when determining a letter grade. This may lead us to believe some students who maintain outstanding work habits understand concepts at a much deeper level than they really do. On the flip side, it may also hide high levels of conceptual understanding in a student who does not demonstrate consistent work habits. We can communicate a child's educational profile more clearly through reporting a child's demonstrated progress on the standards separately from a score related to the discrete skills that are required in the 21st Century.

Q: Can the standards-based rubric be compared or translated into letter grades?

A: Standards-based grading should not be compared to letter grades. Letter grades are often determined through calculation of assignments and tests, comparison with classmates, and sometimes work habits or other skills. Letter grading policies can vary from teacher to teacher. Our standards-based report card measures the achievement and learning of individual students in relation to the grade level standards, not the work of other students. A student's proficiency level is based on his/her mastery of fundamental standards through repeated opportunities to demonstrate learning. This encourages all students to do their best. In addition, 21st Century Skills are separated from content learning standards to provide more specific information about behaviors important to learning.

Q: How do I talk with my child about his/her standards-based report card?

A: It's important that your conversations about school reflect the fact that learning is a process. Some concepts, understandings, and skills are more difficult to grasp than others. Providing students multiple opportunities to learn and practice under the direction of expert teaching, in combination with support at home, will help ensure progress. Receiving a Level 2 score while learning a new skill or concept is considered appropriate throughout the school year. A Level 3 score demonstrating mastery at any point in the year should be celebrated. Earning a Level 4 indicates a strength that is recognized to be above and beyond the standard. Attitudes are contagious and it is important that adults recognize and celebrate the progress toward specific learning accomplishments of children at all levels.

Q: Will it be difficult for my child to transition to a letter grade report card after elementary school?

A: Students who experience standards-based grading should be more self-aware of their strengths, learning preferences, the learning process and varying levels of proficiency that can be attained. This should help our students be more prepared as learners in terms of their readiness for moving to letter grades in middle school. It is our belief that a focus on the process of learning at the elementary level, not the letter grade earned, is what is most important to helping our students become learners who will achieve individual potential. Additionally, Englewood Schools will be evaluating how we will begin to transition to standards-based grading in middle school.

Q: What if my child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or other specialized learning plan?

A: Most special education students are instructed on the general education curriculum using accommodations and modifications when necessary. Students on any kind of a plan with modifications will receive the same 1-4 level proficiency rating that will be accompanied by an "*" indicating that the students' goals are modified per the learning plan. A copy of the student's goals will be attached to the report card each marking period.