



Standards Based Report Cards: Frequently Asked Questions Parent Support Document

What is a Standards-Based Report Card?

On a Standards-Based Report Card, teachers grade students based on their progress toward meeting important end of year skills. Rather than receiving a single grade for a class or a subject (for example, “Reading”), teachers will give grades for several important standards that are taught in each subject. The purpose of the report card is to describe student's current progress toward end of year standards to parents/guardians. This type of report card gives much more specific information about what students are doing in class and how quickly they are making progress toward meeting the goals for the end of the year.

What are the “Standards?”

The state of Oregon has “standards” in each of the core subject areas taught in our elementary schools and teachers use these standards to determine what to teach over the course of the school year. A standard tells teachers and parents what we want students to know by the time they have completed a school year. In each subject area (for example, reading or math), there are several standards that describe exactly what a student will know and be able to do as a result of learning. These standards are specific to the grade level that students are in. For more information about Oregon Standards, please check out the Oregon Department of Education site.

Why is a Standards Based Report Card Important?

Our revised report card is part of our system of “Best Practices” in education. For many years, our teachers have been using standards to organize their teaching. It is important to grade students using these same standards. The report cards will provide parents and teachers with more clear information about *what we want students to learn* (standards) and *what students should be able to do as a result of what they have learned* (proficiency). Our revised report card also meet state requirements about what should be reported to parents. House Bill 2220 requires districts to provide parents with a report about student's academic progress toward proficiency on Oregon standards.

The “grades” used on the new report card are “Descriptors of Academic Proficiency.” What does this mean?

Teachers will be grading students based on how consistently they are able to demonstrate end of grade level expectations for each standard reported on the report card. At the beginning of the school year, or when a standard is just being taught, most students in a classroom will not be “proficient” on the skill or concept. As they are taught, students will more easily and more often show what they know. Our goal is that by the end of the school year, all students will be able to demonstrate proficiency on every standard.

What does each grade, or Descriptor of Proficiency mean?

At each reporting period, students will be given one of 4 possible “grades” for each standard that is taught during the trimester. The grades are as follows:

E = Exceeding Grade Level Standards

The student who receives this grade is demonstrating performance that is ***above the end of year grade level expectation***. Students who are exceeding are able to apply learning to new situations and independently use strategies and skills. They are able to do work that is expected of a student in a higher grade. Some foundational skills may not have an “Exceeds.” For example, once a student knows all the letters of the alphabet, there are no ways to demonstrate “exceeding” this standard.

M= Meeting Grade Level Standards

This grade indicates that the student *has met the end-of-year target for the skill or concept*. **The goal is for all students to receive this grade (or above) by the end of the year.** If the teacher has taught to end of year content standards by the time of the reporting period, your child may receive an “M” (there may be some foundational standards and math standards that are completed by December).

P = Progressing toward Grade Level Standards

The student receiving this grade is *progressing and demonstrates basic or inconsistent application of end of year concepts and skills*. This grade would be appropriate for an “on-level” student in the Fall and Winter for many of the standards. The student is making expected progress but is not yet at end-of-year standards. **It is important to communicate to your child that a P indicates that he or she is “on track” to achieving a “Meets” by the end of the school year.** This is not a “bad” grade!

N = Not Making Expected Progress towards Grade Level Standards

The student receiving this grade *shows limited understanding of end of year concepts and skills*. Student performance is “below” grade level and may need more support at school to catch up. Your child’s teacher may share ideas for helping him or her grow closer to grade level work.

My child got an “NA” for a grade. What does that mean?

Teachers will use the NA grade, meaning “Not Assessed” when there is a standard on the report card that has not been assessed yet. Some subjects and standards are taught only during certain times of the school year. For example, some math standards are taught only in lessons that will be used in the Spring.

Characteristics as Learner & Citizen and PE and Music Grades

Characteristics as Learner & Citizen marks reflect classroom behaviors and are not working towards end of the year standards. Your student will receive marks based on their behaviors over the duration of the grading period. At the elementary level, PE and Music grades combine both content and participation. Like characteristic marks, these grades are not based on end of the year standards but are heavily weighted on the participation exhibited in class.

If I have additional questions, whom should I ask?

Your child’s teacher is the best source of information about the report card. He or she can explain what each standard means, show you samples of your student’s work on the standard, and can help you to understand the grading system. The Principal in your school is also a great resource. Finally, for general information about standards-based grading, you can visit parent information websites such as Oregon Department of Education or the National PTA guide to Student Success, available at your child’s school.