



STANDARDS-BASED GRADING & THE K - 5 REPORT CARD

A GUIDE FOR SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT FAMILIES



Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, Smyrna School District shifted to a standards-based grading approach in Kindergarten through grade 5. The purpose of this shift was to provide students, parents / guardians, teachers and administrators a more accurate view of students' progress in academic and personal growth.

The report card is fully aligned with the State of Delaware's Common Core Standards in English/Language Arts and Mathematics, the Delaware Social Studies State Standards, and the Next Generation Science Standards. The indicators on the report card do not reflect every standard taught and assessed throughout the school year. Rather, they reflect *prioritized* standards that are considered to be indicators of future academic success.

Standards-based grading communicates how students are performing on clearly defined learning targets, and measures students' mastery of grade- level standards by prioritizing the most recent, consistent level of performance.

The report card is designed to:

- ❖ Align with current state standards;
- ❖ Reflect student progress towards end-of-grade-level standards;
- ❖ Be unique to the grade and the standards of that grade; and,
- ❖ Provide more objective evaluation according to consistent grade-level standards.

Research supports standards-based grading and reporting as a basis of communication that will help students learn more effectively through better feedback for teachers, students and families. The Smyrna School District K - 5 Standards-Based Report Card is only one component in our effort to improve outcomes for every student in every classroom.

HOW IS STANDARDS-BASED GRADING DIFFERENT FROM TRADITIONAL GRADING?

Standards-based grading communicates how students are performing on a set of clearly defined learning targets called standards. The purpose of standards-based grading is to identify what a student knows, or is able to do, in relation to pre-established learning targets.

Unlike the traditional grading system, a standards-based grading system measures a student's mastery of grade-level standards by prioritizing the most recent, consistent level of performance. Thus, a student who may have struggled when encountering new material at the beginning of a unit may still be able to demonstrate mastery of key content and concepts by the end of the marking period.

Standards-based grading essentially gives students the practice they need and more than one opportunity to demonstrate success. It uses assessments based on prioritized standards and multiple scores per student, which reflect a student's ability at a specific moment in time.

This is in contrast to the traditional grading system, where a student's performance for an entire marking period is averaged together and typically involves a single, overall numerical grade. As an example, early quiz scores that may have been low would be averaged together with more proficient performance later in the course, resulting in a lower, overall grade than the students *current* performance indicates. The traditional grading system does not always convey precise information regarding student growth.

See a sample report card [here](#).

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT GRADE 04 REPORT CARD 2024-2025 Page 1 of 1

Student: _____
Student ID: _____
School: _____

Academic Performance Level for K-5 Competencies	
Name	Score
Mason	4
Approaching	3
Developing	2
Beginning	1
Not Assessed	NA

ACADEMIC WORK HABITS	
Term	
	T1 T2 T3
Student follows directions and maintains attention to tasks.	
Student actively participates in classroom activities.	
Student is prepared and ready to work.	
Student completes assignments on time.	
Student perseveres through difficult tasks and overcomes setbacks.	

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Term	
	T1 T2 T3
Student shows respect for adults, peers, and property by observing classroom rules and routines.	
Student exercises self-control in words and actions.	
Student takes responsibility for own actions and learns from mistakes.	
Student interacts with others in a positive and productive manner.	
Student demonstrates empathy and compassion for others.	

Attendance Summary By Term:															
T1				T2				T3				Total			
Absent		Tardy		Absent		Tardy		Absent		Tardy		Absent		Tardy	
0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0	
MATHEMATICS 3RD, 4TH & 5TH GRADE												SOCIAL STUDIES			
Operations & Algebraic Thinking												Social Studies			
Number & Operations in Base Ten												Term			
Numbers & Operations - Fractions												T1 T2 T3			
Measurement & Data															
Geometry															
ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS												RELATED ARTS			
Reading												Art			
Key Ideas & Details												Library			
Craft & Structure												Music			
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas												Physical Education			
Range of Reading and Level of Text												Technology			
Complexity															
Foundational Skills															
LANGUAGE STANDARDS												NARRATIVE			
Conventions of Standard English												Term			
Knowledge of Language/Vocabulary												T1 T2 T3			
Acquisition & Use												Comments			
SPEAKING & LISTENING															
Comprehension & Collaboration															
Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas															
WRITING STANDARDS															
Text Types & Purposes/Production & Distribution of Writing/Research to Build & Present Knowledge/Range of Writing															
SCIENCE															
Science															



ACADEMIC PROGRESS INDICATORS

The table below summarizes how academic progress is reported starting in the 2024-25 school year.

PROGRESS INDICATOR	1	2	3	4	NA
Description	<u>BEGINNING</u> Student has a limited grasp of the concepts is performing is well-below marking period expectations for grade-level standards addressed at this point in the year.	<u>DEVELOPING</u> Student has an awareness of basic concepts and shows some progress, but is behind in reaching marking period expectations for grade-level standards addressed at this point in the year.	<u>APPROACHING</u> Student has demonstrated success with a majority of the marking period expectations for grade-level standards addressed at this point in the year.	<u>MEETING</u> Student has met marking period expectations for grade-level standards addressed at this point in the year.	<u>NOT ASSESSED</u> Student was not assessed on this skill or standard during the reporting period.
Words to Describe Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling • Not Yet • Minimal • Requires Frequent Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Understanding • Inconsistent • Making Progress • Requires Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often / Usually • Appropriate • Sufficient • On Track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient • Consistent • Understands <u>and</u> can apply Independent 	

EVIDENCE TO DETERMINE STUDENT PROGRESS

As students work toward achieving grade-level expectations in all areas--both academic and non-academic--teachers carefully consider the following in determining progress:

- A collection of work over time;
- Daily written and/or oral tasks;
- Application of skills; and,
- Periodic formative and summative assessments (quizzes, tests, project-based performance tasks).

Teachers will continue to add comments in narrative form in each of the end-of-trimester report cards. Teachers' comments will address student strengths and areas for growth (both academic and non-academic) as well as individual student goals regarding what is necessary to reach grade-level expectations.



RELATED ARTS, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT & ACADEMIC WORK HABITS

Related Arts (Art, Library, Music, Physical Education/Health, Technology), Social-Emotional Development, and Academic Work Habits will be assessed using the same performance level indicators as academic content, as described above.

GRADING & REPORT CARD COMMUNICATION

Research indicates that a student's chance of success in school improves when there is regular and meaningful two-way communication between the family and the school. The K-5 report card provides direct feedback to families, students, and staff regarding student progress towards the end-of-grade standards.

Reporting student progress is an essential part of this communication process between home and school. Families should have information that accurately reflects a student's level of performance and progress in meeting academic standards. The information that is included on the report card and the accompanying documents should enable families to best support their children at home.

The report card is one way of learning about your child's progress in school. Conferences with your child's teacher, along with work samples, can add to your understanding of his or her performance in school.

The following communication milestones are scheduled into the calendar every year:

- ★ August: New Student Orientation
- ★ September: Open House(s)
- ★ October: Interim Progress Reports Issued
- ★ November: Parent-Teacher Conferences
- ★ December: Report Cards Issued
- ★ February: Interim Progress Reports Issued
- ★ March: Report Cards Issued
- ★ May: Interim Progress Reports Issued
- ★ June: Report Cards Issued



Schools also offer additional ongoing avenues for communication throughout the year:

- ★ Phone calls, emails and other communication apps
- ★ Parent-Teacher Conferences
- ★ Samples of student work (e.g., formative and summative assessments, writing samples, projects)
- ★ District and school websites
- ★ Newsletters and SSD Alerts
- ★ School events
- ★ Parent organization meetings

STANDARDS-BASED REPORTING & SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must be provided with the same opportunity to receive grades in relation to expectations for grade level standards; this is a civil right. Since special education students are a heterogeneous group with various abilities which impact learning,



some may not achieve certain grade-level standards without special services and support. For students with accommodations, the content of the standard remains the same, but the method for learning and demonstrating mastery of a standard may be adjusted. For all students with an IEP, a supplemental progress report is provided that identifies how students are performing on appropriately challenging learning tasks as outlined in the goals and objectives of their IEP.

PROMOTION GUIDELINES FOR KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 5

The fundamental purpose of standards-based grading is to compare student performance to established levels of proficiency in knowledge, understanding and skills. The intent is to evaluate student work in relation to pre-established standards. The promotion of each student will be determined individually, and the decision to promote a student is made on the basis of multiple factors including progress toward meeting reading and math standards, social and emotional development and school attendance ([SSD Board of Education Policy 5112](#)). When a recommendation for a student's retention is made either by the school or the family, a best-interest team meeting that includes parents/guardians, school administration, teachers, and counselors, will be conducted.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[*Report Card Companion to Standards-Based Instruction in Grades K - 5*](#)

A Guide to Standards-Based Instruction for Parents & Guardians for guides for [Kindergarten](#), [Grade 1](#), [Grade 2](#), [Grade 3](#), [Grade 4](#), and [Grade 5](#).

For information specific to how to help your child, please contact your child's school or email SSD.SBRC@smyrna.k12.de.us.