



# 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](#).



Student ID:	Attendance Summary By Term:											
	T1			T2			T3			Total		
School:	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy
<b>Academic Performance</b> Level For K-5 Competencies												
Name	Score											
Mastery	4											
Approaching	3											
Developing	2											
Beginning	1											
Not Assessed	NA											
<b>ACADEMIC WORK HABITS</b>												
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 exercises setbacks.												
<b>SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>												
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.												
<b>MATHEMATICS 3RD, 4TH &amp; 5TH GRADE</b>												
Operations & Algebraic Thinking												
Number & Operations in Base Ten												
Number & Operations - Fractions												
Measurement & Data												
Geometry												
<b>ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS</b>												
<b>READING</b>												
Key Ideas & Details												
Craft & Structure												
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas												
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity												
<b>LANGUAGE STANDARDS</b>												
Conventions of Standard English												
Knowledge of Language/Vocabulary Acquisition & Use												
<b>SPEAKING &amp; LISTENING</b>												
Comprehension & Collaboration												
Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas												
<b>WRITING STANDARDS</b>												
Text Types & Purposes/Production & Distribution of Writing/Research to Build & Present Knowledge/Range of Writing												
<b>SCIENCE</b>												
Science												
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>												
Social Studies												
<b>RELATED ARTS</b>												
Art												
Library												
Music												
Physical Education												
Technology												
<b>NARRATIVE</b>												
Comments												

## 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	<p><b><u>BEGINNING</u></b> Student has limited grasp of the concepts and is well-below end-of-grade-level standards.</p>	<p><b><u>DEVELOPING</u></b> Student has an awareness of basic concepts and shows some progress, but is behind in reaching end-of-grade-level standards.</p>	<p><b><u>APPROACHING</u></b> Student has found success with a majority of the material, but has not met end-of-grade-level standards.</p>	<p><b><u>MEETING</u></b> Student has met end-of-grade-level standards.</p>	<p><b><u>NOT ASSESSED</u></b> Student was not assessed on this skill or standard during the reporting period.</p>
Words to Describe Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Struggling</li> <li>• Not Yet</li> <li>• Minimal</li> <li>• Requires Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some Understanding</li> <li>• Inconsistent</li> <li>• Making Progress</li> <li>• Requires Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often / Usually</li> <li>• Appropriate</li> <li>• Sufficient</li> <li>• On Track</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proficient</li> <li>• Consistent</li> <li>• Understands <i>and</i> can apply</li> <li>• Independent</li> </ul>	



## 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**

Please visit:

[\*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](mailto:SSD.SBRC@smyrna.k12.de.us) .