



Standards-Based Report Card Parent Guide

Benefits of Standards-Based Grading for Students

- Students are partners in their own learning.
- Students monitor their own progress toward the achievement of specified learning targets.
- Learning targets are clearly defined and aligned with state standards.
- Students are offered multiple opportunities and ways through which to demonstrate proficiency.
- Instruction meets the needs of all students.
- All students can achieve their highest potential.

Benefits of Standards-Based Grading for Parents

- Parents can monitor their student's progress.
- Parents can see exactly what their children know and are able to do.
- Parents know in what areas their children need more support and where their students should be pushed to higher levels.
- Report card grades are less mysterious and have more meaning.
- Specific feedback on student progress helps parents build self-esteem, pride, and motivation for students.

Benefits of Standards-Based Grading for Teachers

- Education becomes more learner-focused, so the teacher and the student work more closely together.
- Teachers of the same courses have aligned expectations and standards.
- Teachers work more closely together to align practices and expectations for mastery of the curriculum.
- Teachers know exactly where students stand in their progress toward learning targets and what supports need to be provided.
- Assessment results help teachers determine when students need extra help and when they need more challenging work.

Adapted from "Why Standards-Based Grading?" Quakertown Community School District, November 2011.



Standards-Based Report Card Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is GCISD changing the traditional 1st grade report card to this new standards-based report card?

The new report card is designed to provide more specific and accurate information to parents than the traditional report card. Research has shown that giving specific feedback helps students to set goals and focus on continuous growth, rather than receiving a specific number grade.

2. How were the standards for the report cards determined?

Standards for the report card are aligned with the standards established by the state of Texas, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Standards selected are essential for success in current and subsequent grades and are aligned with the STAAR tests students will take in 3rd grade and beyond.

3. Has the curriculum changed with this new report card?

The new report card isn't the result of a new curriculum. This report card simply changes the way teachers report student progress within the existing curriculum. By reporting progress on specific standards, a student's mastery of the curriculum can be strengthened due to more targeted instruction by teachers and their ability to work toward clear goals.

4. How will my child's progress be reported?

GRADING STANDARDS	
Exceeds the expectations for the standard	E
Meets the expectation for the standard	M
Approaches the expectation for the standard	A
Below expectations for the standard	B
Not assessed at this time	N/A

Student progress toward standards will be marked using the above key. The goal is for students to reach the level of "M" (Meets the expectation for the standard) by the end of the school year on all standards. There will be no +/- reported on any standards.

5. How can my child earn an “E” (exceeds) on the report card?

The “E” (Exceeds expectations for the standard) is reserved to acknowledge that a student has demonstrated exceptional skill or proficiency of the standard in comparison to expectations for the current grade level. In other words, the main goal is to achieve “M” designations for each standard and the use of “E” will be rare. When students earn an “E”, teachers will provide opportunities for students to show increased sophistication through added depth and complexity of the standard.

6. What does it mean if my child drops from “Meets” to “Approaching?”

As parents, it is important to understand that standards may evolve in rigor and expectation to greater levels of difficulty throughout the year. If your child’s progress appears to dip during the year, that doesn’t necessarily mean that they have regressed. Instead, it may be that the level of expectation has been raised and that the student hasn’t yet demonstrated mastery of the new expectations.

7. What are “Independent Reading Levels” and how do they relate to my child’s reading ability?

These reading levels correspond to the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) or Evaluacion Del Desarrollo 2 (EDL2) assessment that is used with all students throughout the year. Reading levels are derived from the following sources: decoding, fluency, and comprehension. All three aspects of a student’s reading are considered when determining their independent reading level.

8. How will teachers assess these standards?

Teachers may assess standards in a variety of ways. Teachers will observe and take notes to record progress when having conferences and working in small groups with students. Formative assessments such as quizzes, paper/pencil tasks, or assessment probes might be used. Student journals in language arts, math and science will be excellent daily assessment tools to see how students use and apply the targeted skills. Projects, research, portfolios, and other student work will be used to assess progress toward standards. Teachers will keep notes and sample copies of student progress throughout the grading period and will use this information to determine students’ progress at the end of the grading period.

9. How do I know what skills to help my child with at home?

By looking at any areas not yet mastered on the report card, parents can help their child with weaker areas or extend their understanding of standards on which they have reached mastery. Additionally, children can always benefit from additional time reading at home. This aids in helping them to build

reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension – which helps in ALL subject areas.

10. What determines student mastery?

Teachers will use a rubric to align student mastery of the standards across the district. Teachers are looking for students to consistently demonstrate understanding of the standard in assessment and daily situations.

11. What happens when a child masters a concept?

Once a child shows mastery in a concept, teachers will continue to challenge students either with learning that extends an existing concept or teaching that raises the level of expectation for mastery.

12. What happens if my child moves from GCISD?

Due to the specificity with the new standards-based report card, the receiving teacher will know exactly what standards have been taught and mastered as well as areas of needed improvement. Since the standards on the report card were derived from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, schools within the state will be instructing and assessing according to comparable standards. Likewise, students moving to a district outside of Texas will be able to present their new school with a detailed report card showing specific skills that have been mastered.

13. Why are we using Standards-Based Report Cards (SBRC) in elementary when middle school and high school are using a traditional grading system?

Using standards for reporting progress helps children understand the learning targets and set goals for their own improvement. This provides students with greater ownership of their learning. While it has not yet been determined whether this year's 1st grade pilot will expand to other elementary grade levels, this practice fits with our district's vision set forth in LEAD 2021 (personalized learning plans for students) and will help students establish a strong foundation in skills as they move to other assessment systems in later grades.

14. How will this new report card impact my child with special needs?

Students receiving special education services will continue to work toward their goals set forth in their Individualized Educational Plan. They will receive a report card that both reflects their IEP and/or functional goals as well as the 1st grade report card standards in a way that is appropriate for their needs.