

NAVIGATING
ROCKLIN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S
STANDARDS-BASED REPORT CARD

K-6
PARENT HANDBOOK



What is the purpose of the elementary report card?

The purpose of the elementary report card is to communicate student progress to parents/guardians, students, and other staff. The report card documents student performance over a period of time and provides feedback regarding strengths and concerns. Learning is measured against California's rigorous, academic standards. Progress is determined through multiple measures (assessments, student artifacts, observations, etc.) It is not the intent of the report card to report on every aspect of learning that occurs in the classroom.

Reporting student progress is an essential part of the communication and partnership process between home and school. Parents and students 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 parents to best support their children at home.

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

Why did Rocklin Unified School District revise the elementary report card?

In 2010 the State Board of Education adopted new rigorous academic standards for California. In the following years, Rocklin Unified School District has worked to implement aligned curriculum, instructional materials, assessments, and beginning in the 2015-16 school year, an elementary report card based on the new standards.

RUSD's goal is to improve student achievement for all students in every classroom every day. 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 parents.

How does the traditional letter grade system compare with Standards-Based Grading?

What is standards-based 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-establish learning targets, as opposed to simply averaging grades/scores over the course of a grading period, which can mask what a student has learned, or not learned, in a specific unit.

How does standards-based grading differ from traditional grading? Unlike with traditional grading systems, 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 at the beginning of a unit, when first encountering new material, may still be able to demonstrate mastery of key content/concepts by the end of a trimester. In a traditional grading system, a student's performance for an entire trimester is averaged together. Early quiz scores that were low would be averaged together with more proficient performance later in the course, resulting in a lower overall grade than current performance indicates.

Standards-based report cards separate academic performance from work habits and behavior in order to provide parents a more accurate view of a student's progress in both academic and behavioral areas. Variables such as effort, participation, timeliness, cooperation, attitude and attendance are reported separately, not as an indicator of a student's academic performance.

How are my child's marks determined?

A student's performance on a series of assessments will be used to determine a student's score on a number of standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Practice assignments and homework are just that, practice, and thus should serve primarily as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers.

It may be helpful to compare the two scoring methodologies. Traditional grading is easy to spot because it typically involves:

- Simple letter grades
- Assessments based on teacher-defined criteria
- A single overall grade per student based on a combination of related and unrelated assessments of skills, knowledge, performance and conduct over a period of time

The main advantages of this method are simplicity and professional freedom. However, it results in a very limited measure of a student's abilities. The A on a child's report card might thrill the parents, but this grade obviously doesn't convey any precise information. Standards-based grading overcomes this problem. The essential qualities of standards-based grading involve:

- Rubrics with meaningful labels
- Assessments based on standards
- Multiple scores per student: one for each standard that reflects the student's ability related to the standard at a certain moment in time

How does the report card help parents?

Standards-based report cards enable parents to receive accurate information based on cumulative student progress throughout the marking period. In addition, they promote more detailed and meaningful conversations at parent/teacher conferences, allow for careful and precise monitoring of student achievement, and reflect grade-level standards and expectations so parents gain a complete idea of student's progress.

What are other useful resources?

These guides, created by the PTA and Greater Schools, detail grade level expectations in mathematics and English Language Arts. They also include ways you can support your child.

<http://downloads.capta.org/edu/ccss/ParentGuideBundle.pdf>

<http://www.cgcs.org/Page/244>

What are the non-negotiable principles of standards-based scoring?

1. Focus on Achievement - other factors will be reported separately (Characteristics of Successful Learner)
2. Not everything is included in the reported achievement level - For example, daily schoolwork, projects, or homework may not be considered when determining a student's achievement to be recorded on the standards-based report card. Teachers look at student's performance on these activities to monitor student learning, identify strengths and weaknesses, and plan for future instruction.
3. Standards-Based Achievement is not based on averages - The final achievement mark on the standards-based report card represents the learning level at the end of an instructional unit. Students are not penalized for mistakes made at the beginning of the learning process.

How will student progress/performance be reported?

To be accurate and fair in reporting both student progress and achievement, teachers use a proficiency scale to report individual progress with the standards in English Language Arts and mathematics.

Four levels of progress are noted using a numeric marking system (numbers 1-4). The descriptor that coincides with each number is most important. The descriptors indicate the level of the individual student's skill acquisition, as well as the confidence/independence with which the student performs the standard.

When using this “standards-based” report card, it is important to note a mark of “3” is the expected goal for students, which indicates that the student is meeting the requirements of the academic standards for his/her grade level. Marks of “4” and/or “1” indicate student performance is significantly above or significantly below grade level expectations.

Understanding the Achievement Levels

4 - Exceeds or E - Excellent

Students achieving at the Exceeds or Excellent level demonstrate superior academic performance, application or student habits. Work that is exceeding indicates an in-depth understanding or exemplary display of the skills and concepts included in California's rigorous, academic standards. The student's performance exceeds what is taught in class.

These students:

- demonstrate broad in-depth understanding of complex concepts and skills
- make abstract, insightful, complex connections among ideas beyond the obvious
- provide extensive evidence for inferences and justification of solutions
- demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and skills effectively and independently by applying efficient, sophisticated strategies to solve complex problems
- communicate effectively and thoroughly, with sophistication

How will student progress/performance be reported?

(continued)

3 - Met or S - Satisfactory

Met or Satisfactory work indicates a solid understanding or display of the skills and concepts included in California's rigorous, academic standards. This is the accepted grade-level performance, application, or level of student habits.

These students:

- can extend their understanding by making meaningful, multiple connections among important ideas or concepts and provide supporting evidence for inferences and justification of solutions
- apply concepts and skills to solve problems using appropriate strategies
- communicate effectively

2- Nearly Met or N - Needs Improvement

Students achieving at the Nearly Met or Needs Improvement level demonstrate marginal academic performance, application or students habits. Nearly Met work indicates a partial understanding or display of the concepts and skills included in the California's rigorous, academic standards. Students achieving at this level are approaching acceptable performance but have not achieved it.

These students:

- make simple or basic connections among ideas, providing limited supporting evidence for inferences and solutions
- apply concepts and skills to routine problem-solving situations
- communicate in limited fashion

1 - Not Met

Students achieving at the Not Met level demonstrate academic performance that is significantly below grade level expectations. Below basic work indicates a need for additional instructional opportunities to achieve even a basic understanding or display of the skills included in the California's rigorous, academic standards.

N/A- Not Yet Assessed | N/T- Not Taught

By the end of the year all standards should be taught or assessed.

How is my child assessed and how will parents/guardians know if their child is performing on grade level?

Students are assessed using multiple techniques. These may include but are not limited to rubrics, observation, performance tasks, application, paper and pencil tasks as well as various summative assessments. Summative assessments occur after the learning has taken place. They measure student achievement, or mastery of standards, at a point of time. Summative assessments determine the knowledge, skills, and understanding students have achieved as a result of classroom practice and instruction. Student achievement on the most recent summative assessments is given greatest priority when determining overall student achievement in that skill/area. Summative assessment is the product.

The Rocklin Unified School District Report Card indicates how a student is performing on end of the year mastery expectations. A student is expected to progress towards meeting the standards over the course of the year. A student might begin the year performing at a Level 1 or Level 2 on some sub categories of reading, writing, and mathematics. A “2” reflects normal progress and is expected in the first two trimesters. The goal is for all students to be at a level “3” by the end of the school year.

Remember, a mark of “3” indicates that a student is consistently performing on grade level and meeting grade-level expectations with independence and excellence. With high and challenging expectations, a “3” is exactly where a competent student should be. “Getting a 4” is not about what more a student or teacher does. It is what a student knows, and at what level he/she applies what s/he knows to new and higher-level situations that exceeds what is explicitly taught in class. The “3” is the top for the grade level and should be celebrated as such.

Why aren't grades just averaged?

Because the purpose of standards-based reporting is to communicate what students know and are able to do, averaging does not necessarily present an accurate picture of where a student is in his/her learning.

A student who struggles in a class at the beginning of a trimester and receives poor scores, but who keeps working and by the end of the trimester can clearly demonstrate competence in the subject, should receive a score that reflects that competence. For example, it is a good thing that the decision as to whether a basketball team wins or loses a game is not determined based on the average of how they practice during the week. It is only the most recent evidence (or performance), the game, that counts!

Consider this example: There are two students, Stewart and Maria. Stewart comes to school fresh from summer camp and complacently strolls through the semester with these weekly scores: 80, 85, 85, 82, 85, 85, 85, 87, and 85. The average is not difficult to calculate, and Stewart happily settles for his "B".

Maria struggles initially with the skills and content, but improves over time, with additional practice. Her performance: 50, 60, 65, 70, 80, 85, 90, 90, and 90. Maria's average (mean) of a little over 75 will, depending on the grading scale, allow her to take home a C or D on her report card if the teacher is devoted to the average, even though any fair observer would note that she outperformed Stewart by the end of the semester.

What are the Characteristics of a Successful Learner?

Characteristics of a Successful Learner

	Excellent (E)	Satisfactory (S)	Needs Improvement (N)
<p>Intrapersonal Domain: Involves the ability to reflect on one's own behavior and emotions, and the capacity to manage behavior and emotions to achieve learning goals.</p>			
Independent worker	Consistently focuses on tasks and is very self-directed.	Sometimes stays on task with reminders.	Rarely focuses on task and requires frequent reminders to stay on task.
Perseveres	Consistently tries very hard, even with a challenging task.	Sometimes tries very hard, even with a challenging task.	Easily frustrated and overwhelmed by challenging tasks.
Demonstrates best effort	Consistently gives best effort on assignments, projects and assessments.	Sometimes gives best effort on assignments, projects and assessments.	Rarely gives best effort on assignments, projects and assessments.
Makes appropriate choices and takes responsibility for behavior	Consistently makes good decisions regarding behavior in structured and unstructured settings, follows directions, and takes responsibility for own actions.	Sometimes makes good decisions regarding behavior in structured and unstructured settings, follows directions, and takes responsibility for own actions.	Needs intervention and support to make good decisions regarding behavior in structured and unstructured settings, frequently needs reminders to follow directions, and has difficulty taking responsibility for own actions.
<p>Interpersonal Domain: Involves expressing ideas, actively seeking to communicate clearly, interpreting and responding to messages from others.</p>			
Demonstrates respect for self/others, rules, and property	Consistently demonstrates kindness, consideration, and respect.	Sometimes demonstrates, kindness, consideration, and respect.	Needs intervention and support to demonstrate kindness, consideration, and respect.
Attentive Listener	Consistently focuses during instruction/presentations and is courteous to all speakers.	Sometimes focuses during instruction/presentations and needs reminders to be courteous to all speakers.	Rarely focuses during instruction/presentations and needs frequent reminders to be courteous to all speakers.
Active participation	Consistently participates in class activities and discussions.	Sometimes participates in class activities and discussions.	Rarely participates in class activities and discussions and needs encouragement from others to engage.
Collaborative Worker	Consistently interacts and communicates positively with group members and assists others through feedback which enhances group projects.	Sometimes interacts and communicates positively with group members and assists others through feedback which enhances group projects.	Rarely interacts and communicates with group members and needs intervention to positively contribute to group projects.

How can I take an active role in my child's education?

The communication and partnership process between home and school is essential to student achievement. Parents, teachers, administrators, and students all play important roles in the success of this process. When one member of the team does not participate, the strength of the support system is jeopardized.

Some ways parents can take an active role in their child's education:

- **Attend Parent Teacher Conferences.** These are held twice a year, however, a conference may be scheduled other times throughout the school year as needed.
- **Discuss grade level expectations with your student.** It is important that both parents and students understand the specific knowledge and skills to be mastered in each grade level.
- **Ask about the school day.** Expect more than just a one word response. Encourage details about what was learned, homework due, and upcoming events.
- **Go over homework with your student.** It is also advantageous to go over any corrected papers or assessments.
- **Read together each evening.** Your child may also enjoy reading to a younger sibling. Enjoying the same book or selection several times should not be discouraged – this may help promote the practice of rereading difficult material to improve comprehension as well as instill a love of reading.
- **Help prepare for tests.** Going over information, worksheets, study guides, or rereading text is helpful and encourages good study habits. One suggestion is to have your child “teach” you what is to be tested. Remember - don't wait until the night before the test to study!
- **Send your child to school prepared with a positive attitude.** A restful night's sleep, good breakfast, completed homework, all needed supplies and papers, and of course encouragement help children get off to a good start each day!

What is a good way to talk to my child about their report card?

Talking with your child about the report card can be a positive, productive experience. The following points may help:

1. Plan to talk in a quiet place and time.
2. Start with the good news. Talk about your child's successes first.
3. For disappointing scores, ask questions so you and your child understand how a score was earned.
 - How difficult was the work?
 - Was extra help needed?
 - Would more active participation have made a difference?
4. Ask for a parent-teacher-student conference if you need more information.
5. Set realistic goals and make a plan for improvement.
6. Work together and follow through on your plan.

How does the K-6 report card fit with middle and high school models of reporting student progress?

Rocklin Unified School District's middle and high schools will continue to report out grades. This process will stay in place in order to stay aligned with our college and university system. They will also continue their practice of examining how students are succeeding at meeting essential skills in each of the subject areas. As always, enrichment and extra support opportunities will be provided for students based on their level of mastery at all grade levels.

How will my child qualify for seventh grade algebra?

Grades are not (were not) part of the data used to qualify students for the accelerated course at the middle school level. Students take a diagnostic test in May of their 6th grade year. In addition, there is a second diagnostic taken in the first week of 7th grade. The results of these tests in addition to SBAC results are used to make the initial placement.