

Teaching and Learning Revealed

This guide has been created to provide parents/guardians with the following information about the Orange Elementary School System's (OESS) Standards-Based Report Cards:

- An overview of the philosophy and purpose
- An explanation of how to use and interpret a standards-based report card, including its connection to the Connecticut Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
- An explanation of the Academic/Success Habits Performance Codes: 4, 3, 2, 1, and N/A
- Answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about standards-based report cards

Reporting student progress is an essential part of the communication and partnership between home and school. We believe that it is our district's professional responsibility to provide parents and students with information that accurately reflects a student's level of performance and progress in meeting academic and social standards. This report card is designed to provide a "snapshot" of grade-level standards and communicates an individual student's progress toward independently meeting those expectations.

Common Core State Standards Implementation

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are high-quality, rigorous standards adopted by Connecticut along with most other states. Part of a national movement, CCSS provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. (<http://www.corestandards.org/>). Designed to develop twenty-first century, globally competitive students, the CCSS were carefully constructed using evidence-based research.

OESS continues to update our district's curriculum and make the instructional shifts needed to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). As a parent, it is important to recognize that these new standards have created shifts in the way that teachers teach, how and what students learn, and the depths of understanding a child must demonstrate to achieve "mastery."

A committee of teachers, curriculum leaders, administrators, and the district's technology department created the OESS report card which is aligned to the CCSS with an expectation for high-quality teaching and learning. Our educators look forward to a continued partnership with you as we prepare your child for college and career readiness. We encourage you to visit www.corestandards.org for further information regarding the Common Core State Standards.

Important Dates

Report cards are issued and available on the PowerSchool Parent Portal three times per year:

- November 21, 2014
- March 20, 2015
- Last Day of School in June 2015

Academic and Success Habits Performance Codes

Four levels of progress are noted on report cards using a numeric marking system (4, 3, 2, 1, and N/A). A descriptor for each score is provided below:

4	3	2	1	N/A
Exceeding Grade-Level Standard	Meeting Grade-Level Standard	Progressing Towards Grade-Level Standard	Does Not Meet Grade-Level Standard	Standard Is Not Assessed At This Time
<i>Student consistently demonstrates an understanding above and beyond what is expected at this grade level and requires differentiated instruction</i>	<i>Student consistently demonstrates mastery of the knowledge and skills expected at this grade level</i>	<i>Student is adequately progressing toward mastery of the knowledge and skills expected at this grade level</i>	<i>Student is not yet demonstrating an understanding of the knowledge and skills expected at this grade level and requires differentiated instruction</i>	<i>This standard is assessed later in the school year</i>

SCORING:

On a standards-based report card, 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 “3” and “2” both indicate that a student is working within the expectations of his/her grade level. The difference is the level of independence and support a student needs to demonstrate mastery. The expectation is that most students will achieve a “3” by the end of the year for each grade-level standard. District curriculum leaders continue to identify the CCSS taught and the district expectations required for each marking period to inform instruction and assessment. Learners are scored on their progress made toward mastery of those expectations set forth for each marking period.

4 – A mark of “4” indicates that the student’s progress exceeds standards because s/he has demonstrated mastery in terms of knowledge, and s/he applies that knowledge in ways that go beyond expectations. Instruction needs to be differentiated for this student because the student has demonstrated mastery of the grade level expectation at this time. Typically, very few students would be at this level of performance. In terms of behavior, students receiving a “4” demonstrate academic and social maturity beyond their years and those of their age/grade appropriate peers.

3 – A mark of “3” indicates that the student’s progress towards end of the year standards meets the district’s expectations at this time. For example, a student who scores a 30% on the unit math pretest and receives a high score, even a 100%, on the posttest has responded well to instruction and receives a “3”. This student has met the expectation independently and requires little to no adult support to demonstrate proficiency after instruction has been delivered. In terms of behavior, the student who consistently (more times than not) demonstrates age/grade appropriate social and academic behaviors meets the expected standard and should receive a “3”.

2 - A mark of “2” indicates that the student’s progression of skills and information is in the expected range, but s/he still requires support and assistance to meet the requirements of the academic standard for his/her grade level at this time.

In terms of behavior, a student would receive a “2” for any of the academic or social behaviors when s/he inconsistently demonstrates or needs reminders to meet the age/grade appropriate expectations as communicated by the teacher.

1 – A mark of “1” indicates that the student is not meeting the requirements of the grade level standard at this time. His/her instructional level is characterized as requiring maximum teacher support and differentiation/accommodations or even modifications. In terms of behavior, the student who often (more times than not) demonstrates social and academic behaviors below what is expected for their age/grade receives a “1”. These behaviors are interfering with their learning and possibly the learning of others. It is expected that teachers have had dialogue with parents prior to the distribution of the report card for any student receiving a “1” for any standard.

N/A – A mark of “N/A” indicates that the standard has not been adequately introduced, covered, or assessed during the marking period. All standards on a grade-level report card will be addressed by the end of the school year.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What are standards?

Standards are what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. It would be impossible to list every standard on the report card. The standards on the OESS report card are a snapshot, a “collapsed” version, of the Common Core State Standards.

What is a standards-based report card?

A standards-based report card provides detailed information on how well your child is progressing towards mastery of *year-end* standards. In Orange, district curriculum leaders continue to identify the Standards taught and district expectations for each marking period to inform instruction and assessment. Standards’ expectations change from one marking period to the next as students move toward the end-of-the-year grade level expectations. Learners are scored on their progress made toward mastery of those expectations set forth for each marking period.

What examples of data do teachers use to assign grades?

With a standards-based approach, teachers evaluate student learning in a variety of ways using classroom observations and classwork, along with formative and summative assessments. The combination of these pieces of evidence, when reviewed with parents, provides a more detailed picture of student progress towards grade level expectations.

Is it possible for students to “drop” from one marking period to another?

It is important to note that the student does not necessarily drop a grade. The score is an indication of performance with expectations of difficulty that increases throughout the school year. In other words, the concepts increase in difficulty as the year progresses. Therefore, a student who demonstrates a score of “3” in the first trimester could earn a “2” in the second trimester when the rigor of the standard has been increased. This shift from a “3” to a “2” indicates the student understands the major elements of the concept but may need more development of the details or application and more teacher support.

How do I help my child “get a 4?”

Remember, a mark of “3” indicates that a student is 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 does. It is what a student knows, and at what level s/he applies what s/he knows to new and higher-level situations that exceeds what is explicitly taught in class.

Standards-based reporting and Special Education?

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) 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 disabilities which impact learning, some may not achieve certain grade-level standards without special services and supports. 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. Modifications, on the other hand, can mean changing the standard itself, identifying standards that are fundamentally related but also developmentally appropriate. The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) makes decisions regarding what content areas, if any; require modifications of the grade level standards. For all students with an IEP, a supplemental progress report is provided that identifies how students are performing on appropriately modified standards and challenging learning tasks as outlined in the goals and objectives of their IEP.

How are English Language Learners (ELL) who are still acquiring English language speaking and literacy skills graded?

Students are assessed at their current grade level using the appropriate grade-level standard-based report card. During parent conferences, teachers will discuss with parents the following: the child's current level of English proficiency; the child's opportunity to learn the content and/or ability to demonstrate the appropriate grade-level standards.

What happens when students transfer to another elementary school outside the district or transition to the middle school?

The standards-based report card contains a legend with a definition for each code. Many districts are transitioning to standards-based report cards and use similar performance codes. The Orange Elementary School System has shared its report card with Amity Middle School (AMS) in Orange and, as always, transition discussions will take place later in the school year to help AMS with scheduling and placement decisions.

Where can I find more information about the Common Core State Standards?

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

<http://vimeo.com/51933492>

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

<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2910>

