



Elementary Report Cards Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of this document?

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to parents/guardians regarding standards-based reporting.

What is standards-based education?

Standards-based grading measures students' mastery of the essential standards set forth by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. A student's individual progress toward grade-level expectations is measured in the content areas of reading, speaking and listening, writing, mathematics, science/technology, and history/social science. The goal of this approach is to provide the teacher, student, and parent as accurate a picture as possible of a student's learning and to encourage a dialogue about how the student can master the material for the class.

How is standards-based grading different from traditional grading?

In the traditional 100-point grading system a student's grades are typically based on all the work assigned in class, including classwork, homework, projects, quizzes, and tests. These scores are often arranged in the grade book based on the type of assignment rather than on the essential standards for the class. The grade may also include points for non-academic factors, such as participation, effort, or attitude. This makes it difficult to determine the meaning of an A, B or C. Standards-based grading corrects this problem by evaluating a student's work in its entirety to determine whether particular content and skills were mastered. Additionally, standards-based reporting does not include non-academic factors like behavior, attitude, and attendance in this grade and reports these elements separately.

Why does my student not receive letter grades?

Traditional letter grades do not provide clear, actionable information about student achievement related to specific content or skills. A standards-based report card grade provides specific information about what your child knows and is able to do. It identifies areas of strength and need related to academic standards and personal growth and development.

What is the difference between the Academic and the Personal Growth & Development sections?

The Academic section reports a student's individual progress toward grade-level expectations as outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The Personal Growth and Development section provides feedback on a student's effort, behavior, and social skills development. This section reflects the frequency that a student is able to demonstrate these personal growth indicators in the classroom.

A student can be progressing academically while still exhibiting poor behavior or work habits. Likewise, it is possible for a student to exhibit excellent effort while requiring academic support to meet grade-level expectations. Unlike academic standards, the personal growth and development elements are assessed based on a student's performance in a particular trimester.

What is Triton's academic evaluation key?

ACADEMIC EVALUATION KEY		
4	Exceeds Standard	The student consistently and independently demonstrates skills and performance above grade-level.
3+	Advancing Beyond Standard	The student generally demonstrates skills and performance beyond grade-level.
3	Meets Standard	The student meets end-of-year expectations for grade-level.
2+	Approaching Standard	The student is approaching full understanding and application of end-of-year expectations.
2	Progress Toward Standard	The student shows partial understanding and application of end-of-year expectations.
1+	Limited Progress Toward Standard	The student is making limited progress and requires ongoing intervention to acquire this skill.
1	Not Progressing Toward Standard	The student is not making progress and requires intervention to acquire this skill.
-	Not Evaluated	This standard is not evaluated during this term.
*	Modified Program	An asterisk indicates a modified program.

What is Triton's personal growth and development key?

PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT KEY		
C	Consistently	The student consistently demonstrates the behavior or social skill.
S	Sometimes	The student sometimes demonstrates the behavior or social skill.
R	Rarely	The student rarely demonstrates the behavior or social skill.

What does "NE" or "-" mean?

There will be times when a standard is not addressed during a particular marking period. Either a "NE" or "-" will indicate when a standard is not evaluated.

What does end-of-year expectations mean?

All academic progress is reported in relation to end-of-year expectations. End-of-year expectations reflect what students need to know and be able to do at the end of their grade level as defined by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Since each standard on the report card is an indicator of where students should be by the end of the year, it is natural for students to earn a "2" or a "2+," especially in earlier trimesters.

With regards to math, some standards are met within a trimester and the end-of-year expectation is evaluated and reported out. Nonetheless, this standard will still be monitored and reported in subsequent trimesters.

Once a standard is reported, teachers will continue to report on that standard for each subsequent trimester. While a particular standard might not be the primary focus later in the year, it is important to continue to monitor whether skills have progressed or regressed. Continuing to report on standards will help address the new state framework's emphasis of having students apply their skills to new performance challenges.

Why do we assess students using end-of-year expectations?

The goal of assessing on end-of year-expectations is to see continued growth throughout the school year. We recognize that students learn at different rates, and believe most important is what they know and are able to do at the end of a school year.

Are the standards the same for special education students?

Yes. All students in Massachusetts are expected to be working toward the standards as outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. State law requires that all students receive the same report card. Modifications to grade level curriculum are detailed in the student's Individual Education Plan. Careful collaboration between classroom teacher and special education teacher is necessary when assessing and grading students on IEPs. In addition to the report card, a detailed narrative report will be completed each trimester by the special education teacher explaining the student's progress and growth toward meeting the goals and objectives stated within the IEP.

What assessments might teachers use to determine student learning outcomes?

Effective assessments provide teachers with diagnostic information to drive instruction. When matched to standards, assessments provide teachers with effective data on what students have learned rather than what has been covered. Assessments for report cards should be ongoing and varied. Teachers continuously assess students and document their progress. Some examples include:

- Observations
- Pre/post tests
- Assessment portfolios
- Rubrics
- Checklists
- Math strands assessments
- District-wide grade level benchmarks
- Running records
- Projects
- Presentations
- Standardized tests
- Interviews
- Self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Other teacher developed tools

What if my child does not reach proficiency when evaluated?

It is expected that teachers will continue to work with students on particular standards until proficiency is reached. When a child demonstrates limited progress and earns a "1" on any given area of the report card, this is an area of concern and warrants more communication between the school and home. The comment area on the report card provides a place where the teacher will identify what the child needs to work on to improve in this area.

You may also be invited to participate in a conversation about the needs of your child.

What if my child reaches proficiency early in the year?

Triton has invested in a range of programming to meet the needs of all students, including those advancing beyond or exceeding grade level standards. By committing to the use of differentiated instructional strategies such as flexible grouping, we have increased opportunities for students to move beyond grade level expectations.

Why aren't there more comments on my child's report card?

The comment area on the report card provides a place where the teacher will identify what the child needs to work on to improve in an area of concern. The comments area is just one method of communication about your child's progress. Additional feedback regarding your child's progress will be shared through parent/teacher conferences scheduled for December and March.

What if I have a question about my child's report card?

If you have questions about your child's report card, you are encouraged to contact your child's teacher.

What if I have a question about report cards in general?

If you have questions about report cards in general, you are encouraged to contact the principal.