

Course Marks and Grading 2022- 2023

Why do we send home report cards?

Report Cards are shared with families to communicate which grade level skills and content your child has mastered and what they are working on mastering.

What are Grade Level Skills?-

- [NYS Next Generation Standards](#) (introduced 2017, fully implement by 2022-2023)
- [Family NYS Standards Resource](#)
- Teacher tools: checklists practices descriptions

What is Mastery Learning?-

- Norm referenced vs. criterion referenced
- Not a bell curve. Not competitive between students.
- Does not rely on one or two assessment for a final grade
- Students are given many opportunities to show that they understand the big ideas that have been taught to them
- Teachers use many sources of evidence to get a holistic picture of what your child is independently able to do.

Whyis Mastery Based Grading is more effective?

- Better determines college and career readiness
- Implements growth mind-set
- Improves equity and supports teachers in evidence based grading
- More effectively identifies areas of strengths and areas of need of individual students

What shift has there been in the Grading Policy

Our grading system communicates your child's overall grade level mastery at a given moment in time. Ongoing feedback from your child's teacher relays their specific progress towards this mastery across the curriculum. Our course marks correspond to the following mastery levels.

- **4= Excels in Grade Level Standards**
- **3= Meets Grade Level Standards**
- **2= Approaching Grade Level Standards**
- **1= Below Grade Level Standards**

We intentionally separate grading and feedback as much as possible for our students, knowing that the research says that the impact of feedback is significantly reduced when connected to alphanumeric grading. Knowing how important feedback is to the learning process we want to ensure that it is as impactful as possible to student learning. In keeping with this belief you will not see the course marks in the remainder of this communication and instead will see the following language: below, approaching,

meeting and excelling in grade level standards.

This course marks system does not perfectly align to mastery based grading, however, it is the system that meets the DOE requirements and most closely aligns with the intentions of mastery based grading.

We looked to many peer schools and the most cutting edge research to build this policy. Schools such as Brooklyn New School, Poly Prep, Berkeley Carroll, Mary MacDowell all use similar grading policies.

Resources

- [Grading for Equity](#)
- [Edutopia](#)
- [Dylan Wiliam Center](#)
- [NCTM](#)
- [Antiracist Education](#)

FAQ

Q: Where can I view my child's report card?

Report cards will be posted in your child's [NYCSA account](#). If you have forgotten your password, please use the "Forgot Password" option. If you have not set up this account or need assistance, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Amina Hamidi in Parentsquare.

Q: The grades on the report card look the same as pre-pandemic report card grades. What has changed?

Yes, we have returned to using a 1, 2, 3, 4 system of course marks. The process teachers go through to determine if a student receives each course mark is different, however. Prior to the pandemic students were assessed only on certain data points that were included in their assessment folder. Through a system of averaging, including participation and assessment marks, students were assigned an overall course mark. Mastery based grading does not involve averaging or rate students on participation. Students are given many opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and all of these moments are taken into consideration when teachers determine a course mark. Students are not punished for what they did not know at the start of the unit and instead are rewarded for what they have accomplished by the end of the unit.

Q: What communication has been shared prior to report cards to inform me of my child's progress?

A: Glows and Grows were shared for each content area for Marking Period 1 on December 9th.

At the end of each core content area unit, a progress checklist is sent home to share which skills your child has mastered and which skills they are still working on. The information shared

below can also be found in the grading policy document. These checklists were sent home starting in unit 2 for many grades to allow students to fully transition into the school year.

Reading

Meeting Standards	A child who has a check mark demonstrating mastery for every reading behavior is considered meeting grade level standards.
Approaching Standards	A child who has check marks indicating they are still working on some behaviors is approaching grade level expectations.
Excelling in Standards	Students who have a check mark demonstrating mastery for every reading behavior and demonstrated mastery of the 8 literary reading practice standards are considered excelling in grade level standards.

Writing

Grades K- 3

Meeting Standards	A child who has demonstrated mastery for all the writing expectations is considered meeting grade level standards.
Approaching Standards	A child whose writing checklist indicates they are still working on some expectations is approaching grade level expectations.
Excelling in Standards	Students who have a check mark demonstrating mastery for every writing behavior and demonstrated mastery of the 8 literary writing practice standards is considered excelling in grade level standards.

Grades 4-5

Meeting Standards	A child who has demonstrated mastery for all the writing expectations on the rubric is considered meeting grade level standards.
Approaching Standards	A child whose writing rubric indicates they are still working on some expectations is approaching grade level expectations.
Excelling in Standards	Students who have a rubrics demonstrating mastery for every writing behavior and demonstrated mastery of the 8 literary writing practice standards are considered excelling in grade level standards.

Math

Meeting Standards	A child who has a check mark demonstrating mastery for every math skill is considered meeting grade level standards.
Approaching Standards	A child who has check marks indicating they are still working on some behaviors is approaching grade level expectations.
Excelling in Standards	Students who have a check mark demonstrating mastery for every math skill and have demonstrated mastery of the 8 math practices standards is considered excelling in grade level standards.

Q: Why don't we get checklists for Social Studies?

We are in the process of preparing to shift our social studies curriculum to include more Project Based Learning as per District 15's plan for embedding enrichment into all subject areas. While the staff engages in this work this year and next year, we will be revising our checklists. To allow the staff sufficient time to do this work well, we will not be sending home checklists based on the previous curricular structure this school year.

Q: Will I hear from my child's teacher before report cards are sent home?

A: Yes, per the information above several progress documents are shared with families at the end of units of learning via your child's take home folder. If your child is approaching or meeting standards (course mark 2- 4) you will likely not receive additional communications prior to report cards. If your child is below grade standards in a content area (course mark 1) you will hear from your child's teacher before report cards go home.

Q: How are my child's report card grades used? Who else will see them?

A: Grading in elementary school does not impact student access to future opportunities. Only final June course marks are shared with middle schools. Middle schools in our district do not look at grades, our district uses a lottery system for admissions. Of the limited choices families have outside of our district, there is a very small number that will be using screens, most of which are based on audition or sibling priority. We have reached out to the few schools using grade screening to clarify our grading system so they are able to correctly interpret our course marks. Private schools either contact schools directly to understand their grading policies or more commonly use independent assessments to evaluate if a student would be a good fit for their community.

Q: What does excels in standards mean? How will I know if my student is going to get a 4?

Students who have demonstrated mastery of **all** content standards and are able to consistently and independently demonstrate **all 8** Practice Standards in the classroom will receive a course mark of Excels in Standards (Course Mark 4). Teachers have developed checklists for each Practice which can be found on our website here. These practices or habits must be demonstrated in the classroom on a consistent basis. There will not be a separate communication sent home for the practices, however, you are welcome to set up a time during parent engagement on Wednesday mornings to ask your classroom teacher for individualized information about which practices your child demonstrates consistently and which practices they are working on.