

Odyssey Charter Schools

Parent Guide to Standards Based Grading

The Standards-Based Report Card seeks to provide meaningful feedback that is accurate, consistent, and supportive of learning, so both students and parents can track student progress toward mastery of key academic concepts, reflect upon strengths and weaknesses, and identify pathways to deeper learning.

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-established 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 course.

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 course, when first encountering new material, may still be able to demonstrate mastery of key content/concepts by the end of a grading period.

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 (both formative and summative) will be used to determine a student's overall grade in a course. Practice assignments (homework) are just that—practice, and thus primarily serve as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers.

Scores on practice assignments are not used as a major component of a student's academic grade. Teachers may require students to complete all of their practice work prior to allowing them to take, or retake, an assessment.

Will my student still receive teacher comments on their report card?

Yes. Individualized feedback is an essential component of standards-based grading. Effective feedback is a more useful source of information than simply assigning a numeric value or letter grade to student work.

What will each of the numbers in the 4 point scale represent?

1- Standard Not Met- The student has not met the achievement standard and needs **significant** improvement to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required at this grade level.

2- Standard Nearly Met- The student has nearly met the achievement standard and needs **some** improvement to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required at this grade level.

3- Standard Met- The student has met the achievement standard and demonstrates the knowledge and skills required at this grade level.

4- Standard Exceeded- The student has exceeded the achievement standard and demonstrates **advanced** knowledge and skill toward mastery of standards at this grade level.

/- Standard not evaluated- This standard has not been covered in the present term.

Is it possible to achieve a grade of 4?

Yes it is. However, a score of (4) indicates performance that is consistently above what is expected for mastery at that point in the school year. Level 4 work would indicate a much deeper understanding of a standard, the ability to apply that knowledge, make connections and extend learning beyond the targeted goal.

By definition, level 4 work reflects higher order thinking, application, connection and extension of targeted goals. While being instructed above grade level is not required in order to achieve a (4), students who are taught above grade level have consistently shown mastery of a subject at their current grade level. Achieving a (4) does not preclude a teacher from suggesting areas for improvement in the comment section of the report card. Receiving a (4) does not guarantee that a students' performance would remain at that level across all reporting periods, or for all course standards.