

# Mannheim District 83

## Standards-Based Report Cards Explained

What's the same?

- The purpose of report cards is still the same: to communicate information about academic achievement and learner characteristics to parents and students.
- Report cards will still be distributed 4 times per year.

What's different?

- Achievement will no longer be reported using letter grades (A, B, C, D, and F).
- Report cards will now report on what students know and are able to do in relation to established state and national standards.
- Instead of letter grades, there will be numbers to communicate if students are working BEYOND the standard (4), MEETING the standard (3), APPROACHING the standard (2), BEGINNING to learn the standard (1).

### FAQs -- Frequently Asked Questions about Standards-Based Report Cards

Why are we changing our report cards?

Mannheim District 83 is always striving for a strong home-school connection.

Standards-based grading and reporting is being used to better communicate 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 doesn't always communicate clearly what a student has learned or not learned.

Why do I hear so much about the standards?

Teaching and learning in our district is aligned with state and national standards. Our curriculum (what we teach) is developed, and our materials and resources (what we use to teach) are purchased with standards as the guiding influence. The Common Core State Standards in English/language arts and mathematics were developed and adopted by 43 states across the United States, including Illinois.

Do the performance descriptors on the report card correlate with letter grades?

No, the following performance descriptors are used to indicate a student's progress in meeting academic learning standards. They are evaluated on a four-point scale.

What marking system is used on the new report cards?

Academic Key:

4 = BEYOND - The student consistently extends, demonstrates, or models a thorough understanding of the standard beyond what was explicitly taught.

3 = MEETING - The student consistently meets the standard by demonstrating a thorough understanding of skills and concepts taught.

2 = APPROACHING - The student is approaching the standard but demonstrates more limited understanding of skills and concepts taught. Additional teacher support is needed.

1 = BEGINNING - The student is having difficulty meeting the standard and is unable to demonstrate an understanding of skills and concepts taught without extensive teacher support.

N/A = Not assessed at this time

Learner Characteristics Key

4 = ALWAYS - The student always demonstrates this characteristic without prompting

3 = MOST - The student usually demonstrates this characteristic, but may require reminders from time to time

2 = SOME - The student demonstrates this characteristic some of the time and requires frequent reminders

1 = SELDOM - The student seldom demonstrates this characteristic

How does standards-based grading differ from traditional grading?

- a. 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 quarter 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.
- b. 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, homework, and attendance are reported separately, not as an indicator of a student's academic performance.
- c. On traditional report cards, students receive one grade for reading, one for math, one for science and so on. On a standards-based report card, subjects are divided into a

list of skills and knowledge that students are responsible for learning. Students receive a separate mark for each standard.

- d. The marks on a standards-based report card are different from traditional letter grades. Letter grades are often calculated by combining how well the student met his/her particular teacher's expectations, how he/she performed on assignments and tests, and how much effort the teacher believes was put forth. Letter grades do not tell parents which skills their children have mastered or whether they are working below, at, or above grade level. Standards-based report cards will provide more consistency between teachers over the years than traditional report cards, because all students are evaluated on the same grade-appropriate skills. Parents can see exactly which learning objectives their child have mastered.

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.

How will I know if my child needs help?

Receiving a 1 or a 2 on the report card can be a sign that a student is in need of extra support in the areas where they are receiving low marks. This is one benefit of a standards-based report card, areas in need of support are clearly evident.