



## **A Conversation About Standards-Based Reporting For Parents**

The standards-based report card reflects a philosophy of identifying student progress related to learning. This reporting places an emphasis on growth, understanding, and mastery of skills over time. Standards are statements about learning expectations for students. A standards-based report card gives students a clear message about what they know, what they are able to do, and what they need to learn in relation to the Illinois Learning Standards.

Students are evaluated on standards listed in each content area, and progress is reported in relation to expected levels of performance at that point in time. Students also are evaluated on their work habits and social skills. Feedback in these areas is an important part of the communication between school and home.

The standards-based report card provides a specific picture of what the student is expected to know and be able to do, as well as his or her progress towards those goals. Research shows that children learn best when they understand clearly what they are expected to know and do. The standards-based report card is designed to empower students and allow them to take more ownership of their learning. It also enables parents to see where their child is doing well, and where improvement is needed.

The standards-based report card provides a basis for better communication among students, parents and teachers, with a focus on your child's learning; it is not a comparison of how your child is doing in relationship to other students in the class.

### **How are grades reported?**

The reporting system has 4 levels of proficiency that are not related to the traditional grading system of A, B, C, D or F.

### **Standards-Based Reporting in District 146**

E (Extends): Student consistently demonstrates application and/or understanding that extends beyond what was taught in class.

M (Meets): Student demonstrates application and understanding of the concepts and/or skills taught in class.

A (Approaching): Student demonstrates partial understanding of the concepts and/or skills taught in class.

B (Below): Student demonstrates partial understanding, with consistent assistance, of the concepts and/or skills taught in class

Keep in mind that an **M** or **“meets standards”** isn’t the same as a B. It means your child has demonstrated the application and understanding of the concepts and/or skills taught in class for that grading period. This is a celebration point in your child’s learning.

Students can earn an **A** or **“approaching proficiency”** which can be a shock for some families. This merely means that the skills or concepts are new learning underway for the student. On the upside, early in the learning, low scores aren’t averaged into the final grade—so once your child masters the concept, the final mark shows that. This is how you can observe the growth in learning for your student. Along the way, we suggest checking your child’s online reporting system in PowerSchool and communicating with your child’s teachers with any problems or concerns.

**E** may be the trickiest to understand. If your child earned A’s on traditional report cards, your child may have received them for meeting the teacher’s requirements, not necessarily for excelling at or going beyond grade level according to state standards. In our system, 4’s may be harder to come by (and 3’s should be celebrated). **An E indicates that your child consistently extends the grade level work beyond what has been taught in class.**

As the standards-based reporting system becomes familiar, you’ll get more comfortable. The important thing is that your child is learning and making progress. Celebrate the learning, and the grades will become a secondary focus.

## A Comparison

<b>Standards-Based vs Traditional Report Card</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Standards-Based Report Card</b>	<b>Traditional Report Card</b>
<b>How are the report cards different?</b>	Subject areas such as reading and math are sub-divided into standards sets which identify what a child needs to learn or master.	Grades are given for each subject area such as reading, math, science or an isolated skill such as 'computes accurately.'
<b>How are grades determined?</b>	Grades reflect the level of proficiency on various standards sets for each subject area.  A student's level of proficiency is based on teacher observations, classwork, project work, performance assessments, and summative assessments.	Grades reflect an averaging of scores to determine a number grade for a subject area.  Students' scores are derived from combining practice assignments, classwork, homework and teacher observations and tests.  Grades from one term may be separate from another term. You can't change them if the child's performance improves.
<b>What is the advantage to each type of grading system?</b>	Grades are based on the level of achievement the student attained at the end of the learning cycle for each standard.  Parents can see which standards students have mastered and which ones need more work.  Homework completion and work habits are reported separately from mastery of concepts and skills.	Most adults understand this type of grading system from their own experiences as students.  Grades can be raised by doing extra credit, which may inflate the grade without accurately reflecting what the student knows.  Giving a zero grade for missing assignments lowers a student's grade disproportionately; the grade then does not accurately reflect their knowledge or skills.
<b>What are the benefits of separating work habits from achievement?</b>	Both are assessed, but reported separately. This provides a more accurate picture of a child's learning.	When combined, grades can be overinflated and do not provide an accurate picture of a child's achievement.
<b>What are the disadvantages to this type of grading system?</b>	Change takes time. It will be important to build the knowledge and understanding of everyone involved.	Students are being scored on assignments before they have had sufficient practice to expect mastery. The grade summarizing a content area such as reading or math doesn't tell the parent which standards the child knows or does not know.