

BEYOND PROFICIENCY: WHAT COMES AFTER PROFICIENCY?

Teachers work with all students to motivate and educate them to develop to their highest level of potential. Instruction for all students is differentiated in a standards-based system. When a student is proficient in all of the skills and benchmarks identified at that grade level, the teacher provides differentiated instruction in order to move the student beyond the identified benchmark to deeper levels of understanding. The daily work completed by each child and the on-going communication with the child's teacher serves to clarify the growth each child is making beyond the proficiency level.

WHAT IF A CHILD NEVER REACHES PROFICIENCY IN ALL OF THE IDENTIFIED AREAS?

Each child will be provided with differentiated instruction and support "along the way" to help him or her become proficient in each of the identified areas. One of the advantages of a standards-based report card is that it provides the current teacher with a clear roadmap in planning, and helps the next year's teacher have a better understanding of the rate of skill development in previous years. The district may, in some cases, recommend additional learning opportunities to enable the student to reach proficiency.

WHY ARE GRADES NOT USED ON THE REPORT CARD?

In a standards-based learning environment, the emphasis is on learning and continual progress. In order for each child to develop a clear sense of what they know and what they need to know, the child needs to be aware of how he or she is

doing in specific areas and skills related to reading, writing and math. A letter or percentage grade merely tells the student and parent how he or she performed on average in a broad area but typically does not provide the feedback that fosters mastery learning or the intrinsic motivation to learn and to grow in a specific skill area. A standards-based report card emphasizes "learning" over "earning".

HOW CAN PARENTS SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN AT HOME?

A key advantage to the new reporting system is that it provides more specific information to parents in working with their child at home on identified skill areas, either to support the school's efforts in educating the child to reach proficiency or to reinforce the school's efforts to move the child beyond proficiency to advanced levels. The list of skills helps parents know what their child is working on in school, and can provide the basis for conversations at home between parents and their children. The new report card along with on-going discussions with the child's teacher provides parents with a closer look at the type of skills the child is working on at his or her grade level, and helps to set a clear direction toward proficiency, excellence and life-long learning.

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Elementary Report Card **K - 4**

Informational Guide



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Overview

This guide serves to explain Muhlenberg Elementary Center's elementary standards-based report card. This report card is designed to stimulate an on-going conversation between teachers, parents and students about what is expected of students in a rigorous academic program.

The purpose of this report card is to provide a clear and accurate description of each child's progress in three areas:

- ☐ Performance relative to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards established by the PA Department of Education (PDE).
- ☐ Academic performance relative to Muhlenberg School District's curriculum and grade level benchmarks and expectations.
- ☐ Demonstration of the characteristics of a successful learner.

The elementary standards-based report card is issued four times a year. The report card serves as one communication device used by teachers to inform parents of their child's progress. Muhlenberg School District faculty and administration are dedicated to providing on-going information regarding the progress of all children. Parents are invited to communicate with their child's teacher as needed. We value the vital role parents play in this process.

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS?

The PA Department of Education (PDE) has mandated a standards-based educational system. Pennsylvania standards define what students should know and be able to do at different grade levels from kindergarten through 12th grade. Standards provide consistent targets for students to meet as they progress through school. All students beginning in third grade take the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests in math,

reading, science and writing. Standards provide a focus for aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment. The Muhlenberg School District's local curriculum is aligned to meet and comply with the standards. Both the PA Standards and the district curriculum are reflected on the report cards.

HOW DOES A TEACHER EVALUATE A CHILD'S PERFORMANCE?

In standards-based classrooms, the focus is on a student's performance over multiple opportunities, not simply grading and averaging of tests and quizzes. Each quarter provides students multiple opportunities to practice, attain, and demonstrate proficiency on the PA Standards and the Muhlenberg School District curriculum. A student's knowledge and skills are measured on a continual basis, stretching students to perform at their highest level of potential. Teachers collect evidence of a child's achievement through careful observations, the examination of student work, discussions, projects, performance tasks, quizzes and tests. Teachers record information about each child's progress on a frequent basis, analyze and compile that information, and finally use the data to evaluate each child's progress.

HOW IS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT NOTED ON THE REPORT CARD?

The elementary report card provides feedback about a student's mastery of the standards. Performance is measured using a numerical scale that indicates the student's progress toward proficiency in each particular standard.

EXPLANATION OF PERFORMANCE LEVELS:

4 – Advanced (*Exceeding standards, excels at expected levels*) – Indicates that a student is meeting the standards and performing above and beyond the expected level

3 – Proficient (*At expected level*) – Indicates that a student is currently meeting the academic standard and is performing at the expected level.

2 – Basic (*Making progress, but below expected level*) – Indicates that a student is currently making progress toward meeting the standard, but is doing so at a rate below the expected level or with support.

1 – Below Basic (*Insufficient progress toward meeting standards, significantly below expected level*) – Indicates that a student is not meeting the academic standard with support and is making progress at a rate below the expected level.

/ - Not Assessed at This Time

Some of the skills listed on the report card are end of the year competencies, so it will not be unusual for students to be "making progress" toward meeting the standard at the beginning of the year, with growth to proficiency by the year's end. Other areas represent skills that students should master at a specific quarter within the year. It is important to remember that the skills listed on the reported card are benchmarks assessed over time through a variety of measures in order to determine whether the child has obtained proficiency on the skill, or needs further instruction. Each of the report card skills represent smaller, more discreet sub-skills that are stepping stones to proficiency.

In areas for which there are no state standards, i.e. handwriting, music, skills for successful learners - the performance level indicates each student's performance in comparison to the expected level of performance (as defined by grade level rubrics).