



## Frequently Asked Questions from Parents Regarding Standards-Based Grading

**Will all grade levels use this method of grading?** This grading will be implemented in TK - 5<sup>th</sup> grade only. Middle school students (6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade) will continue to receive A-F grades. The reason our middle school students will not transition to standard-based report cards is because they feed into the Oxnard Union High School District high schools where traditional letter grades are used.

**In the past, “E” was used to indicate “exceeds Expectations”. Will that continue?** The grading scale will list 1-3 1= Not met, 2=Progressing and 3= Met. However, the comments section is where a student’s next steps are communicated to parents.

**Were grades reported this way last year?** Last year, our report cards were standards-aligned meaning that they listed specific standards, but a mark was only recorded for the academic area, not individual standard. With standards-based grading, we are able to be more specific so that you know what skills your student is mastering and where they can use help or extra challenge.

**What kind of assessments are given?** An assessment can consist of both informal and formal assessments after a lesson. The assessment will not necessarily be a comprehensive test. The progress is measured through a combination of formal and informal classroom assessments in addition to summative tests. Even reading a passage can be a way of assessing a child’s level.

**If a student is absent or has behavior challenges, will that affect his grade?** Standards-based grading focuses on a student’s mastery of standards and reflects academic progress. Attendance and behavior grades are reflected in a different area of the report card and do not factor into academic achievement.

**Why do teachers support this method of grading?** This grading method allows the teacher to provide more detail about the standards being taught in addition to monitoring how the students are learning. It provides teachers with clear data on areas where a student might need more targeted support or enrichment.

**Are grades being reported this way statewide?** The standards are determined by the State. However, the way districts report student proficiency of the standards is a district decision. Previously we were reporting grades in a traditional way. Several districts across the state and Ventura County (Las Virgenes, Conejo Valley, Simi, Oak Park, Santa Paula, Ventura and others) have implemented standards-based grading.

**Are teachers the decision makers of which standards are listed on the report card and which standards are taught?** All teachers are responsible for teaching the standards. As far as the selection of specific standards for the report card, a committee of teachers analyzed each standard to decide if it would be included in the report card. The team sent out the selected standards as well as the non-selected standards to gain feedback from the grade-level team districtwide.

**Are other districts grading the same standards?** Each district decides which standards will be included on the report card. However, PVSD staff have selected the most impactful standards. Our selected standards are very similar to the standards selected in neighboring districts.

**What will I see on papers that come home? Will it be based on a percentage?** Papers will be marked 1, 2, or 3 rather than a percent. The performance levels do not directly translate into a percentage. A mark of a 3 does not equate to 75%, rather a 3 indicates the student is meeting the grade level expectations for the trimester.

**If my student earns a 3 during the first trimester on a given standard, does that mean they have met the standard for the year?** Each trimester, grade level standards are marked based on what has been taught and what has been assessed that that point in time. If a student earns a 3 on the first trimester report card, it does not mean that the student has learned all they need to learn for the entire year for that standard. It means that, **based on what has been taught and assessed so far**, the student has demonstrated grade-level skills. Many subject areas build upon skills throughout the year; as a result, your child's mark will reflect the progression of skills. The expectation is for students to master end-of-year grade-level standards.

**How will my child transition to a traditional grading structure in middle school after using this type of grading scale?** Students will have a far greater understanding of their academic areas of strength and weakness. Beyond a letter grade, students will be able to articulate their progress on individual skills. However, fifth grade teachers will explain the traditional grading structure to fifth graders prior to their transition. Sixth grade teachers will understand that traditional grades are new to their students and will assist them with the transition.