

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is a standards-based report card?

A standards-based report card provides parents with specific information about their child's achievement relative to each standard. Academic standards are a set of learning goals for each grade level and subject area. These grade specific learning goals identify the content and skills students must achieve by the end of each school year. These standards increase in complexity as students move from one grade level to another. You may also review all K-12 academic standards on the PA Department of Education website at www.pdesas.org.

How is achievement identified on the report card?

Each academic standard listed on the report card will be evaluated as follows: Meets the Standard (M); Progressing Toward the Standard (P); and Limited Progress Toward the Standard (LP). It is important to note that many of the skills listed on the report card are end-of-year competencies, so it will not be unusual for students to be "progressing towards the standard" at the beginning of the year, with proficiency or beyond by year's end.

There is a section on the report card for evaluation in "characteristics of a successful learner". These markers represent behaviors or characteristics that are important for students to promote a successful academic experience. The work habits that students bring to the learning environment are critical to a student's long-term success. Teachers reinforce these skills with each child, emphasizing the importance of strong work habits and positive social interactions. Evaluation of these characteristics will be as follows: student always or almost always exhibits the characteristic (A); student sometimes exhibits the characteristic (S); at this time, student does not exhibit the characteristic or needs to improve in this characteristic (N).

How will the teacher assess my child's progress?

In standards-based classrooms, the focus is on a student's performance over multiple opportunities, not simply grading and averaging tests and quizzes. A standards-based report card prioritizes **learning** over **earning**, and differs from a traditional report card which gives percentages or grades based on achievement.

Teachers collect evidence of students' achievement through careful observation, examination of students' work, discussions, projects, performance tasks, quizzes and tests. Teachers record information about each child's progress on a frequent basis, analyze and compile this information, and use this data to evaluate a child's progress towards meeting grade level standards. The district has developed a set of criteria for each standard on the report card. These criteria, in the form of rubrics, will help teachers evaluate the progress of your child's achievement at each trimester. A student who is identified as "meeting the standard" has achieved appropriate learning and growth at each reporting period.

How is proficiency reported for Chapter 14, students with Individualized Education Plans, Chapter 15, students with 504 Plans, and Chapter 16, students with Gifted Individualized Education Plans?

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulate assessment practices for students who are classified with a disability or are in need of specially designed instruction. These students must be graded using the same grading system as all other students and their academic program must be aligned to the state's academic standards. The planning teams for each student determine, what, if any, accommodations, modifications and/or specially designed instruction are needed for the student to demonstrate mastery of the standards. Each team aligns each annual goal to the appropriate standards and monitors progress throughout the school year.

How can families support their children at home?

Standards based report cards provide specific information to parents about how they can best work with their child at home on identified skill areas. The academic standards help caregivers know exactly what their child is working on in school and can provide the basis for conversations at home between families and their children. This information can be used by families to support the school's efforts in educating their child to reach proficiency or to move their child to more advanced levels. The report card serves as one communication device used by teachers to inform parents of their child's progress. Families are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher as needed.