



STANDARDS BASED GRADING



Standards-Based Grading & the K-1 Growth Report

Understanding Your Child's Progress: A Guide for Milford School District Families



STANDARDS BASED GRADING



Introduction

Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, Milford School District shifted to a standards-based grading approach in kindergarten and is now making the shift as our students progress into first grade. The purpose of a standards-based student growth report is to communicate a learner's proficiency level as they progress toward meeting the defined learning standards. Learning standards are the nationally established academic skills your child should know or be able to do by the end of the school year.

The student growth report fully aligns with the State of Delaware approved Common Core Standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, the Delaware Social Studies State Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards. The indicators on the growth report do not reflect every standard taught and assessed throughout the school year. Rather, they reflect mastery levels of *prioritized* standards that are considered necessary for future academic success.

The growth report is designed to:

- align with current state standards;
- reflect student progress towards grade-level standards;
- be unique to the grade and the standards of that grade; and
- provide more objective evaluation according to consistent grade-level standards.

Research supports standards-based grading and reporting as a basis of communication that will help students learn more effectively through better feedback for teachers, students, and families. The Standards-Based Growth Report is only one component in Milford School District's effort to improve learning outcomes for every student in every classroom.

Standards-Based Versus Traditional Grading

Standards-based grading communicates how students perform on a clearly defined set of learning targets called standards. Standards-based grading aims to identify what a student knows or can do in relation to pre-established learning targets.

Unlike the traditional grading system, 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 when encountering new material at the beginning of a unit may still be able to demonstrate mastery of key content and concepts by the end of the marking period or by the end of the school year.

Standards-based grading gives students the practice they need and more than one opportunity to demonstrate success. It uses assessments based on prioritized standards and multiple scores per student, which reflect a student's ability at a specific moment in time.

In contrast, in the traditional grading system, a student's performance for an entire marking period is averaged together and typically involves a single overall letter or numerical grade. As an example, early quiz scores that may have been low would be averaged together with more proficient performance later in the course, resulting in a lower overall grade than the student's current performance indicates. The traditional grading system does not always convey precise information regarding student growth.



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Academic Progress Indicators

Academic progress is reported on a scale of 1 to 4.

4 Exceeding the Standard

A “4” indicates the student has advanced understanding and exceeds grade level expectations. A student receiving a “4” demonstrates academically superior skills in that specific area. This student applies learning and concepts in new and varied ways, challenges him or herself to think deeply to make connections, and demonstrates this advanced knowledge at school.

3 Meeting the Standard

A “3” indicates the student has a proficient understanding and meets grade-level expectations. We want all of our students to reach a level “3” by the end of the school year. A student receiving a “3” is right on track with our high academic expectations. A “3” is something to be celebrated!

2 Approaching the Standard







A “2” indicates the student has basic understanding and is approaching meeting grade level expectations. A student receiving a “2” understands the basic concept or skill but has not yet reached the proficient level. A “2” should indicate that the student’s performance varies in consistency concerning the accuracy, quality, and level of support.

1 Limited Progress Toward the Standard

A “1” indicates the student has minimal understanding and does not meet grade-level expectations, and performance is inconsistent even with guidance and support. Students receiving “1” will need additional support and/or interventions to learn the materials and progress toward meeting the standard.

NA Not Assessed at This Time

NA is used when the teacher has not yet introduced the standard or skill or there is not sufficient evidence of student achievement available to determine progress.

 Summary of the Progress Indicators	
	4 Exceeding the Standard <i>“Can do consistently above grade level”</i>
	3 Meeting the Standard <i>“Can do consistently”</i> 
	2 Approaching the Standard <i>“Can do, but inconsistent”</i>
	1 Limited Progress Towards Meeting the Standard <i>“Attempts, but with minimal success”</i>



Student Evidence to Determine Progress

As students work toward achieving grade-level expectations in all areas - both academic and non-academic - teachers carefully consider the following in determining progress:

- A collection of work over time;
- Daily written and/or oral tasks;
- Application of skills; and
- Periodic formative and summative assessments (quizzes, tests, project-based performance tasks).

Teachers will continue to add comments in narrative form in each of the end-of-marking period growth reports. Teachers' comments will address student strengths, areas of growth (both academic and non-academic), and individual student goals regarding what is necessary to reach grade-level expectations.

Related Arts

Related Arts will be assessed using the same performance level indicators as academic content, as described above. Due to the rotating schedule, students are assessed twice per school year in related arts. This allows for a more thorough and genuine reflection of a student's progress.

Kindergarten Related Arts	First Grade Related Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical Education/Health• Art• Character Education• Developmental Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical Education• Art• Music• Character Education• Library/Media• Technology

Social Development, Work Habits & Qualities of a Learner

Student success depends on more than the achievement of standards. Students are also observed in other areas, such as being self-directed learners, producing quality work, working collaboratively with peers, self-regulating their emotions, and being respectful to themselves and others, all of which are traits of successful students. These Qualities of a Learner will be reflected using individual comments from your child's teacher.



Grading & Growth Report Communication

Research indicates that a student's chance of success in school improves when there is regular and meaningful two-way communication between the family and the school. The K-1 growth report provides direct feedback to families, students, and staff regarding progress toward the end-of-grade standards.

Reporting student progress is essential to this communication process between home and school. Families should have information that accurately reflects a student's level of performance and progress in meeting academic standards. The information included on the growth report and the accompanying documents should enable families to best support their children at home.

The growth report is one way of learning about your child's progress in school. Conferences with your child's teacher and work samples will improve your understanding of their performance in school.

The following communication opportunities are scheduled into the calendar every school year:

Face-to-Face	Growth Reports
Kindergarten Orientation - August	MP 1 - November
Open Houses - September	MP 2 - January
Conferences - October	MP 3 - April
Conferences - Sept.- June by request	MP 4 - June

Formal parent-teacher conferences are held in October. However, parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's teacher to ask for a conference at any time. Also, schools offer additional ongoing opportunities for communication throughout the year, including:

- Phone calls and emails
- Communication apps
- Conferences
- Samples of student work
- District, school, and teacher websites
- Newsletters and MSD Alerts
- District and school events
- Parent organization meetings



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Standards-Based Reporting & Special Populations

Students who have an IEP

Standards-based grading principles are equally as applicable and appropriate for students with disabilities as they are for their peers. IEP teams, including general educators, should determine what, if any, modifications are needed for students to master grade-level expectations. Some students on an IEP have accommodations that support them in making progress toward grade-level standards. These students will be instructed with these accommodations and then graded using the academic progress indicators described above. Other students may have modified grade-level standards written into their IEP. If a student has a modified grade-level expectation as part of his or her IEP, the academic progress indicator, which represents the teacher's assessment of the student's performance on the modified standard, should be noted on the growth report. Parents should be aware that their student is working toward a modified standard. The teacher may provide additional details in the comments section or an attached document.

Students who are Multilingual Learners

Standards-based grading principles are equally as applicable and appropriate for students who are learning English as they are for their native English-speaking peers. Multilingual Learners may have modified grade-level expectations for oral language, communication, or both within various content areas. Based on language proficiency, Multilingual teachers may modify any Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening Standards and any communication standards within other content areas. Multilingual Learners and their English-speaking peers are assessed on the same academic grade-level standards. The modifications and accommodations provided support the mastery of these standards. Parents should be aware that their student is working toward a modified communication standard and is receiving accommodations to support the mastery of academic standards. An additional document, the ML Narrative, will be attached to the growth report, which includes knowledge about their student's current English language development.

Students who are in the Dual Language Spanish Immersion Program

Students in the Spanish Immersion Program will be assessed on the appropriate academic grade-level standards. They will also be assessed on oral language and communication standards for Spanish language development. An additional document, the Student Proficiency Report (SPR), will be attached to the growth report, which includes knowledge about their child's current Spanish language development.





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Promotion Guidelines

Student promotion is dependent upon several factors. The promotion of each student will be determined individually, and the decision to promote a student is made on the basis of multiple factors, including progress toward meeting English language arts, math, social studies, science standards, and school attendance. When a student does not meet the promotion criteria, the student will be retained or assigned remediation through interventions at the school administration's discretion. In consultation with a student support team, the school administration may retain/place/promote a student under certain circumstances, including excessive absences.

You can find a complete copy of the [Milford School District Promotion Policy](#) on our district website or by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/MSDPromotion>

For Additional Information

For information specific to how to help your child, please contact your child's teacher.

For further information regarding the updated growth report, contact your school administrators or Dr. Bridget Amory, Director of Student Learning at 302.422.1600 or BAmory@msd.k12.de.us

Sample Growth Reports

See a sample growth report at milfordschooldistrict.org/learning-in-msd

Grade 1 - Growth Report

SCIENCE

	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4
Demonstrate understanding of the Next Generation Science Standards in the areas of:				
Physical Sciences				
Earth and Space Science				
Life Science				
Engineering, Technology & the Application of Science				

RELATED ARTS*

	MP2	MP4
Physical Education		
Demonstrate the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness		
Art		
Create, present, respond, and connect to artistic work		
Music		
Create, perform, respond, and connect to music		
Character Education		
Demonstrate self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills		
Library/Media		
Explore resources, build knowledge, solve problems, and collaborate with others in a safe, legal and ethical way		
Technology		
Recognize the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living, learning and working in an interconnected digital world		

ACADEMIC

Student Name: _____
Student ID: _____
Teacher: _____
Marking Period: _____
School Year: _____

Special Programs: _____

Achievement Scale: 4 - Exceeding the Standard 3 - Meeting the Standard 2 - Approaching the Standard 1 - Limited Progress Towards the Standard NA - Not Assessed

Attendance: Excused _____ Unexcused _____ Tardy _____ YTD _____

Grade 1 - Growth Report

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4
Reading				
Retell/describe stories including description of characters, settings, and major events using key details				
Identify who is telling a story				
Compare/contrast adventures of characters in stories				
Identifies the main topic of a text and retell key details				
Describes connections between individuals, events, or ideas in a text				
Clarifies the meaning of words and phrases in a text or information				
Know and use a variety of text features to locate facts or information				
Compare and contrast two texts on the same topic				
Writing				
Writes opinion pieces with an opinion, reasons, and a sense of closure				
Writes informational pieces using some facts and a sense of closure				
Write narratives with 2 or more sequenced events, some details, and temporal words				
Foundational Skills				
Applies grade-level skills to decoding words				
Reads with sufficient fluency to support comprehension				
Speaking & Listening				
Participates in collaborative conversations about 1st grade topics				
Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says or about an orally read text				
Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly				

MATH

	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4
Operations and Algebraic Thinking				
Represent & solve word problems involving addition and subtraction				
Understand and apply the properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction				
Add and subtract fluently within 20				
Understand and solve addition and subtraction equations				
Numbers and Operations in Base Ten				
Count, read, and write numbers to 120				
Understand place value for two-digit numbers				
Compare two two-digit numbers using symbols >, =, and <				
Add and subtract within 100 using models, drawings, or strategies				
Mentally find 10 more or 10 less than a given two-digit number				
Measurement and Data				
Measure lengths				
Tell and write time in hours and half-hours using analog and digital clocks				
Represent and interpret data				
Geometry				
Distinguish and compose shapes based on their attributes				
Partition circles and rectangles into halves and fourths				

QUALITIES OF A LEARNER

*Due to the rotating schedule, students are only assessed in related arts twice per year

Students are more than the achievement of standards and are also observed in other areas such as being self-directed learners, producing quality work, working collaboratively with peers, self-regulating their emotions, and being respectful to themselves and others. The following are some individual comments from your student's teacher on these areas: