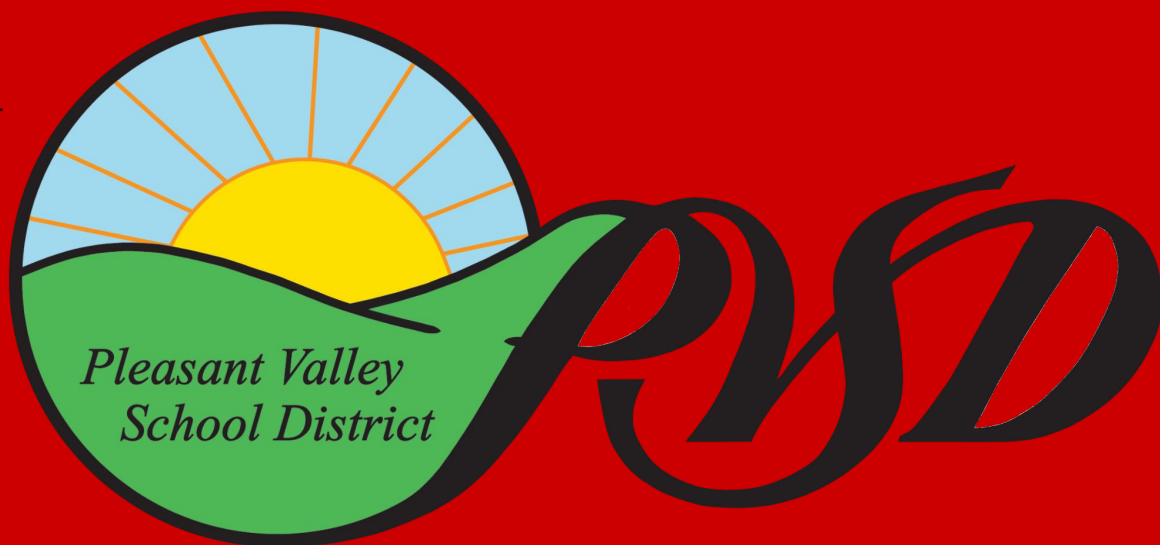




Standards-based Grading Guide for Families

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OVERVIEW

Introduction to Standards-based Grading (SBG)

In striving to provide a rigorous, student-centered, and engaging learning experience for every child, the Pleasant Valley School District has revised the manner in which student progress is reported in transitional kindergarten through fifth grades.

The purpose of the elementary report card is to communicate student progress to parents/guardians/caregivers, students, and staff. The report card documents student performance over a period of time and provides feedback regarding strengths and areas of growth. Learning is measured against California's rigorous academic standards. The information provided by standards-based grading accurately reflects a student's level of performance and progress toward meeting standards.

A standards-based grading system allows students to be aware of what is expected of them, gives teachers across the district a consistent understanding of what each child should know and be able to do, and communicates to families, in a common language, student progress toward meeting grade-level standards.

- Teachers are able to use ongoing assessments as a way to guide classroom instruction.
- The process of reteaching creates an opportunity for students to learn from their mistakes and continually grow.
- Students are able to practice toward mastery of standards without the penalty of receiving a poor grade.
- Standards-based reporting provides teachers with the opportunity to clearly communicate progress with students and families.

This guide provides information about standards-based grading and report cards, including, additional background information, description of proficiency levels, assessment, and frequently asked questions.

STANDARDS-BASED GRADING (SBG) SYSTEM

Overview of the SBG system

Standards-based grading communicates how students are performing on a set of clearly defined learning targets called standards. The purpose of standards-based grading is to identify what a student knows, or is able to do, in relation to pre-established learning targets, as opposed to simply averaging grades/scores over the course of a grading period, which can mask what a student has learned.

Unlike traditional grading systems, 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 at the beginning of a unit, when first encountering new material, may be able to demonstrate mastery of key content or concepts by the end of a marking period. In a traditional grading system, a student's performance for an entire marking period is averaged together which may result in a lower overall grade than current performance indicates and does not present an accurate picture of where a student is currently at in his/her learning. Standards-based grading is not based on percentages, but rather it represents the level of proficiency at the end of an instructional unit. Students are not penalized for mistakes made at the beginning of the learning process.

Consider this example. There are two students, Student A achieved the following scores for the grading period: 80, 85, 85, 82, 85, 85, 87, 84, and 85. The average of Student A's scores is a "B". In comparison, Student B initially struggles with the skills and concepts, but improves over time, with additional practice. Student B's scores over the course of the trimester are: 65, 60, 65, 70, 80, 85, 90, 90, and 90. Student B's average is a little over 75 and would equate to a "C" on the report card, however, it is evident that Student B outperformed Student A by the end of the grading period. With standards-based grading, student proficiency is measured by mastery of the standards, not an average of marks over time.

BENEFITS OF SBG

Benefits of SBG for students, teachers, and families

Benefits of a standards-based reporting system

- Measures what a student should know and be able to do by the end of each grade in each subject area.
- Indicates what skills students have mastered, as well as their strengths and areas for growth.
- Progress is reported for each of the grade-level priority standards rather than a single, averaged grade in each subject area.
- Students, families, and teachers work together toward shared goals to ensure that progress is made each year.
- Students know exactly what is expected to master goals for a particular subject area and families will be better able to support their child's learning at home.
- All teachers across the district will have the same expectations and common understandings of the standards that are a priority at each grade level and be able to build student knowledge based on mastery of the previous year's grade-level standards.



ASSESSMENT

Using assessment to determine proficiency of a standard

Students are assessed on what they are taught. All students in the same grade level, no matter what school, will be evaluated using the same standards. Students are not graded as they are learning information, but rather after they have had the opportunity to learn and practice the new content and skills. Practice assignments and homework are just that, practice, and thus should serve primarily as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers. Work habits and areas of responsibility are reported separately.



Students' level of proficiency toward mastery of the standards is assessed using multiple measures, which include but are not limited to rubrics, observation, performance tasks, application, paper/pencil tasks, as well as summative assessments. Summative assessments occur after learning has taken place. Summative assessments determine the knowledge, skills, and level of understanding students have achieved as a result of classroom instruction and practice. Summative assessment results assist in determining a student's proficiency level toward mastery of the standards. Student achievement on the most recent task(s)/ assessment(s) is given the greatest priority when determining overall student proficiency of the standard.

MARKS

Proficiency indicators

Three levels of progress are noted using a numeric marking system (numbers 1, 2, or 3). The descriptor that coincides with each number is most important. Descriptors indicate the level of a student's skill acquisition, as well as the confidence and independence with which the student performs the standard. It is important to note that a mark of "3" is the expected goal for students, which indicates that the student is meeting the requirements of the academic standards for his/her grade level. A descriptor of each indicator is provided below.

3	2	1	/
Meeting Standard	Progressing Toward Standard	Not Meeting Standard	Standard not assessed at this time
Student consistently demonstrates a secure understanding of the grade level standard.	Student demonstrates a developing understanding of the grade level standard.	Student demonstrates an emerging understanding of the grade level standard.	The standard was not assessed during the current marking period.

Standards-based report cards are issued three times per year in alignment with the PVSD marking periods.

- December
- March
- June (last day of school)



FAQs

Frequently asked questions regarding SBG

Why a standards-based report card?

Standards-based report cards provide an indication of how well a student is progressing toward mastery of grade level standards.

What is standards-based reporting?

A standards-based reporting system is designed to inform parents about their child's growth/progress toward achieving specific end of the year learning goals. The standards establish challenging performance expectations for all students. They describe what students should know and be able to do at the end of the academic year.

Why have the report card and grading practices changed?

The report card was revised to provide more concrete information to students, teachers, and parents about student growth/progress toward meeting grade-level standards. For example, with the previous report card, students received one grade for each content area. On a standards-based report card, each of these subject areas is further expanded to include a list of skills and concepts students are responsible for learning. For each standard assessed during that marking period, students will receive a proficiency indicator (3, 2, or 1). With this knowledge, parents and teachers are better able to guide and support learning for students and help them be successful in a challenging academic program.

How does a standards-based report card better inform parents?

A standards-based report card enables parents/guardians to receive accurate information based on cumulative student progress throughout the marking period. They can see which learning targets their child has demonstrated mastery of and which learning targets need continued review, reteaching, and additional practice. The revised report card allows for careful and precise monitoring of student achievement.

Some standards on the report card were not evaluated this marking period as noted by a slash (/). Why weren't these standards evaluated?

The standard may be slashed for a marking period since the skill may not have been taught or assessed at that time. When the standard is taught and students have had ample opportunity to learn and practice the standard it will be evaluated and their proficiency reported.

FAQs Continued

Why are only some of the standards listed on the report card?

Teams of teachers reviewed the California State Standards for each grade level during the process of developing the revised reporting system. In their review, teachers selected the descriptors which were considered most significant for student growth in each subject area for the grade level. These standards are often referred to as “priority standards”, however, it does not mean that the other standards are less important, or that they will not be taught. In order to effectively communicate student progress, specific standards were selected to efficiently report growth during each of the three marking periods.

How does the standards-based report card compare to the traditional letter grade system?

Standards-based proficiency indicator reporting is different from traditional grade reporting. Letter grades are typically calculated by combining how well the student met a teacher's expectations, how the student performed on assignments and tests, and how the student is doing in comparison to classmates. Letter grades do not tell parents which skills their child has mastered or whether he or she is working at grade level. A standards-based report card measures indicate a student's level of proficiency in comparison to mastery of the grade level standards. It provides a clear picture of standards that a student has mastered and standards that he/she needs additional time or support with.

Why are there no letter grades?

The standards-based report card rubric approach (3, 2, or 1) provides information about student achievement without the need for letter grades. One of the biggest adjustments for students and parents/caregivers is that standards-based report cards focus on end-of-the-year learning goals and mastery of standards instead of an average of the scores. This means that in the first or second marking period a student might have several marks indicating that he or she is not yet proficient in some skills. This is normal since most students will not meet all of the end-of-year grade-level expectations in the first or second marking periods. Remembering that every child learns differently, the goal is to reach level “3”, meeting standard, by the end of the school year.

Can a student perform at a level “3” during one marking period and then receive a level “2” or “1” in subsequent marking periods?

Expectations change from one marking period to another as the student moves toward meeting end-of-year grade level standards. A student may meet grade-level expectations during the first marking period, but as the expectations and rigor increase, the student may not demonstrate the same level of proficiency during the next marking period. A student may receive a “3” in the first marking period and then receive a “2” or “1” in future marking periods.