

August 13, 2024



Hello Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2024–2025 school year! We are excited to have your family as a part of the Lancaster School District. As you know, in the state of California, student achievement is measured by mastery of grade level standards in each subject. For the past three years, a committee of teachers, parents, administrators, and other staff have been working on building a report card system that more accurately reports where students are in their journey towards mastering those grade level standards throughout the year. The Lancaster School District will be implementing a standards-based report card in all elementary schools, grades K–6, beginning in the **2025–2026** school year.

However, before we are ready to push this out district-wide, we are implementing a large pilot at four school sites and in a few grade level teams in other schools this year. The schools and grade levels that will be using standards-based grading and report card in **2024–2025** are:

- **Discovery elementary – K–5**
- **Joshua elementary – K–6**
- **Lincoln elementary – K–5**
- **Sierra elementary – K–5**
- **Jack Northrop elementary – 2nd grade**
- **Linda Verde – 1st and 5th grades**
- **Mariposa elementary – 4th grade**
- **Miller elementary – 1 kinder teacher and 1 first grade teacher**
- **Monte Vista elementary – kindergarten and 1st grade**

These schools and grade levels will be using the new report card all year long to report on how students are doing with the grade level standards and it will look very different from a traditional A–F report card.

You are receiving this letter because your child is enrolled in a class that will be using standards-based grading and report cards this year.

We know this is a big change and raises a lot of questions. To help with some of the answers, we have attached a “Frequently Asked Questions” page to this letter. Your child’s teacher will be communicating with you frequently throughout the year to help explain your child’s grades and answer any questions you may have. In addition, there will be a “parent/guardian guidebook” that will be sent home and we will also hold several “Family Information Nights” at the schools where standards-based grading is being implemented to help families understand the grading process and report cards.

Our goal is that the report card makes it clear for families what students are learning, how well they are doing in mastering the grade level standards, and how work habits and behaviors impact learning.

We thank you for your participation, feedback, and engagement with this very important process and look forward to working with you this year!

Sincerely,

Krista Thomsen

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Academic Achievement Grade Reporting

K - 8th - Academic Achievement Level Descriptors

- 4 = Thorough Understanding and Application
- 3 = Adequate Understanding and Application
- 2 = Partial Understanding and Application
- 1 = Minimal Understanding and Application
- NE = No Evidence of Understanding or Application
- N/A = Not Assessed/Addressed during this grading period

These are the numerical “grades” or “marks” that are used to indicate how students are performing for each of the academic standards listed on the report card.

Sample Report Card Marks

Mathematics	Q1	S1	Q3	S2
Uses the four operations with whole numbers to solve problems	2	3	3	4
Uses place value understanding to perform multi-digit arithmetic	NE	1	1	3
Understands how a fraction is written as an equivalent decimal	N/A	2	3	3

Behavior/Work Habits Grade Reporting

K - 8th Grade Learner Behavior Descriptors

- E = Excellent: Consistently meets/exceeds expectations
- G = Good: Regularly meets expectations
- S = Satisfactory: Usually meets expectations
- N = Needs Improvement: Infrequently meets expectations
- U = Unsatisfactory: Does not meet expectations

These are the letters that will be used to indicate how students are performing in each of the behaviors and work habits listed on the report card.

Example Reporting

Learner Behavior:	S1	S2
Self-Directed Learner		
Works independently	S	G
Asks for help when needed	S	G
Organizes workplace	S	E
Uses materials properly	S	E
Uses time wisely	S	E
Follows school/classroom rules and directions	S	E
Uses technology appropriately	G	E
Community Contributor		
Demonstrates empathy for others	G	E
Shows respect and appropriate behaviors in all areas of the school community	S	G
Collaborates productively with others	N	G
Quality Producer		
Work quality demonstrates the individual's best effort	N	G
Completes work neatly	N	E
Works and monitors progress towards learning goals	S	E

Standards-Based Grading and Reporting - Frequently Asked Questions

Learning is a journey. Students learn and grow at different rates. Standards-based grading identifies where your child currently is on their educational path so that you, as parents/guardians, can work together with teachers to support your child in meeting annual learning goals.

Understanding the Shift from Traditional to Standards-Based Grading - [CLICK HERE](#)

for an informational graphic or visit the Curriculum and Instruction Website at www.lancsd.org for more information. *And you can always contact your child's teacher or school with specific questions.*

What is standards-based grading and reporting?

A standards-based reporting system is designed to inform parents/guardians about their children's progress toward the grade level California Standards set forth by the California Department of Education. In a standards-based system the score represents what is learned – where the student is in relation to the expectation or standard.

A standards-based report card:

- provides a clear message to parents/guardians about which skills and concepts students know and are able to demonstrate in relation to established state standards
- helps teachers and students focus on identified end-of-year expectations from the very beginning of the year, giving students a direction for their learning
- aligns instruction, assessment, and grading with standards
- creates a higher level of consistency and continuity in assessing among teachers and across grade levels

Do the Achievement Level Descriptors on the report card correlate with letter grades?

No. The Achievement Level Descriptors are used to indicate a student's progress in meeting academic learning standards. The marks on a standards-based report card are different from traditional letter grades. Letter grades are often calculated by combining how well the student met the teacher's expectations, how they performed on assignments and tests, and how much effort the teacher believes they put in. Letter grades do not tell parents/guardians which skills their children have mastered or whether they are working at grade level.

On a standards-based report card, the effort, behavior, and work habits of students are separated and reported on using the Learner Behavior Descriptors. In this way a student's progress in learning the material is clearly separated from their effort and behavior in two separate grades. It is important to note that the traditional grades of A, B, C, D, and F do NOT equate to the numbers and letters used to describe academic and behavior progress.

Should I be worried if my student has a 1 or 2?

The mark of a "1" or a "2" is not a cause for serious concern if the student is also receiving satisfactory behavior marks. It is important to understand that many of the standards a student must learn are goals for the end of the year. Some of the standards take all year to master. So a mark of 1 or 2 early in the year typically indicates that the student is making progress in the learning and is on track toward mastery...and that is a good thing. However, if there is ever any question about your student's grade, feel free to contact your child's teacher.

Does homework count as part of the grade?

Most homework will not count towards the mastery of standards because it is often assigned as learning practice. Students should feel free to take academic risks and grow from their mistakes; therefore, practice is not a good measure of student achievement. However, completion and timeliness will be reported in the "Work Habits" section of your student's report card. The distinction is best understood as one between practice assignments and performance assessments. Some examples of performance assessment might include: projects, essays, or tests. Some examples of practice assignments might include: quick pre-writes, worksheets, note-taking, homework, and practice problems.