

## Reading and Understanding Your Child's Report Card

In order for students to be successful, schools must regularly communicate with families about a student's progress. Parents must also regularly inform school staff about how they see their child progressing and if their child is struggling. This requires two-way communication. One of the most common ways that schools communicate with families about a child's progress is through report cards.

A report card provides information about a child's progress across subject areas such as math, reading, and science. Most report cards include sections on academic subjects, work habits, social skills, and other learning goals. They may use different grading scales to report grades. A scale may be letters or numbers. Parents should become familiar with the scale their child's school uses. Grading scales may change from grade to grade, even within the same school or district. If you have questions about the grading scale, ask your child's teacher or the principal.

Standards-based grading, sometimes called proficiency grading, is a way teachers measure a student's progress in meeting their grade's learning goals. In Minnesota, these learning goals are based on Minnesota state standards. An example of a first grade reading comprehension standard would be a student's ability to ask and answer questions, including who, what, and where, to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. Each state's education agency establishes standards for what a student is expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. It's common to measure progress at the end of a grade level.

It's important to understand the different skill areas on the report card. Language like "relates well to others" may not be clear. If this is the case, ask your child's teacher for examples of how this applies to your child.

It's important to discuss your child's report card with their teacher. Talk about all skill areas, not just the ones that need improvement. Try to focus on the positive areas first and then discuss the lower grades in a calm and rational manner. After this, you can work with your child and their teacher to develop strategies or an action plan for addressing areas of concern. Ask the teacher for suggestions and resources you can use at home with your child.

It's important to also talk to your child about their report card. Ask them how they feel about classes, their likes and dislikes. Ask if there is anything in the report card they would like you to talk to their teacher about. Try to keep the conversation positive by focusing on their successes. If they are struggling, ask your child where they could use more help and what that help might look like.

Parents who speak English as a second language are entitled to an interpreter. If you have a language barrier, ask the report card to be interpreted by an interpreter or a cultural liaison who speaks your language.

If your student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), you may also receive a separate progress report. This report details your child's progress toward meeting their annual IEP goals. Your IEP case manager is available to answer questions about this report. You can also refer to the following PACER handouts [\*Individualized Education Programs \(IEP\) Progress Reports\*](#) and [\*How Will I Know If My Child is Making Progress?\*](#)