

Frequently Asked Questions About Standards-Based Reporting for the WPSD Elementary Progress Report

What is a Standards-Based Progress Report?

A Standards-Based Progress Report identifies the most important skills and concepts that a student should learn in each subject at a particular grade. Students are scored based on the demonstration of their learning of those skills and concepts. A Standards-Based reporting system is designed to inform parents about their child's progress toward achieving those standards, or in our case our Critical Concepts.

What is a Critical Concept?

A Critical Concept is an articulation of focused content based on the Colorado State Standards with defined measurable learning targets. Each Critical Concept breaks the skills and content down into:

- Proficiency Score 4: Learning targets that are more complex or go beyond grade level skills and concepts
- **Proficiency Score 3: Learning targets indicating grade level skills and concepts**
- Proficiency Score 2: Learning targets indicating simpler or foundational skills and concepts

Why not use grades?

Grades can be very misleading. Using a traditional grading system, a "B" or "C" could mean a student is missing some critical skills or concepts, or it could mean the student has a high level of proficiency but may be missing some assignments, thus bringing an overall grade down. Because grades are normally based on an average, a student who struggles at the beginning of a quarter, but then makes improvements would be penalized for the lower scores earlier in the quarter. And sometimes grades are dependent on how other students in the class perform.

In a Standards-Based grading system, proficiency scores go up as a student demonstrates their learning and achieves identified targets. Final scoring reflects their best learning. Students typically have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning and those learning targets are clearly communicated. The focus shifts from earning points on completed assignments or tests to a score that reflects what the student has learned.

My child is academically strong. How will standards-based teaching, learning and grading challenge my child?

Through standards-based instructional methods, teachers will know if students have already mastered concepts prior to or at the beginning of a lesson or unit. It will give teachers an early opportunity to provide meaningful and challenging work for these students. In the classroom, teachers have always been and will continue to challenge the students who are achieving at or above grade level. Teachers differentiate instruction so that students continue to grow and progress. In fact, more than ever, they will be able to see who really has mastered the concepts and skills and may need more challenging work, and who needs additional instruction or intervention.

Will my student still receive teacher comments on their Progress Report?

Yes. Individualized feedback is an essential component of any system that reports progress to parents and will continue to be an important component in the new Progress Report.