



Dear Parents,

The Standards–Based Report Cards for PreK–First Grade are designed to inform you about your child’s progress in mastering state standards. These standards establish high and challenging expectations for all students in preparing them for 21st Century workplace skills. This report card also provides you with a more detailed outline of what your child should know and be able to do.

The standards listed on the report card represent the general expectations and “big ideas” that should be accomplished by the end of the grade level year. However, the report card does not include all standards taught. Keep in mind that all children learn and develop at different rates and have different strengths and needs. Many of the skills listed build on one another, and thus demonstrated mastery will often not be observed until the last nine weeks of the school year. A mark of “=” is the expected end–of–year goal and indicates that the student has effectively met the requirements of the standard listed.

We are committed to preparing your child for success in school. Your willingness to join us is valuable to your child’s education and our capacity to provide the best possible education. We encourage you to communicate regularly with the school and your child’s teacher.

We value your participation and your confidence in Greenville County Schools. If you have any questions about the standards–based report card, please be sure to talk with your child’s teacher.

Greenville County Schools, Academics Division

Definitions of PreK–First Grade Marking Guidelines:

The following symbols are used to mark each standard on the report card. The report card is completed 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarters.

Student Skills Key:

- +** *Exceeds Standard*—independently uses/applies knowledge with little or no support; indicates unusually high achievement
- =** *Meets Standard*—demonstrates grade expectations for concepts and skills; has achieved end-of-year goals for the grade level
- #** *Making Sufficient Progress*—making progress toward achieving skills and learning end-of-year goals
- *Not Yet Making Progress*—struggles to demonstrate progress; needs additional support/ extra review

Blank Skill has not been assessed or introduced

Students who receive markings of “=” or “#” for a given item are progressing at an appropriate pace. Students who receive a “-” may need extra help.

Questions/Answers:

1. What is the purpose of Standards-Based Report Cards?

Standards-based report cards are designed to inform parents about their child's progress towards achieving specific learning standards. The standards listed on the report card represent the general expectations and "big ideas" that should be accomplished by the end of the school year. However, the report card does not include all standards taught. Many of the skills listed build on one another, and thus demonstrated competency will often not be observed until the last nine weeks of the school year.

2. How does the Standards-Based Report Card compare to traditional letter grade report cards?

Traditional letter grades may seem more understandable, but provide little detail about what students know and are able to do. Standards-based report cards measure how an individual student is doing compared to specific grade level standards. This information can assist parents in being better able to guide and support their child's success at school.

3. What type of information do teachers use to determine mastery?

Skills should be rated based on the curriculum taught and on multiple types of supporting data rather than a one-time assessment. Supporting data may include teacher observations, checklists, anecdotal records, math journals, writing samples, reading benchmarks, and other informal and formal assessment activities.

4. Is it possible for students to move down or drop from one quarter to the next?

The marking provided is an indication of the student's performance compared to the standard. Since the standards are generally end-of-year goals, the expectation of difficulty can increase throughout the year. For example, a student who receives a "+" in quarter 1, could earn a "-" in quarter 2 as the expectations can sometimes increase in difficulty.

5. How can a student exceed the standards?

It is important to understand that exceeding a standard is not the same as receiving a letter grade of A or 100. For example, if a first grade student received an A on every math test, he or she would probably receive an A on the report card. A mark of "=" is a similar equivalent because the student has met the standard and grade level expectation through consistent accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality. The shift in thinking from A, B, C, D, F letter grades is that "=" is the top for the grade level and should be celebrated as such.

6. Is it possible for a student to achieve a mark of "+"?

Yes, but few students in the early grades are at this level. A mark of "+" indicates performance that is consistently well above what is expected for mastery. The student is consistently and independently demonstrating a deep understanding of the standard, the ability to apply the knowledge, and the ability to make connections that extend learning beyond the targeted goal.