

THURSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Progress Reports Guide

In an effort to make Thurston's quarterly progress reports more useful to parents, we have created this three-part guide. The first part provides an overview of the purpose and the process, the second part includes the answers to a number of frequently asked questions (FAQs), and the third part lists all the possible pre-written comments that teachers may use.

Part I: Overview

Progress reports are intended to provide students and their parents with a snapshot of the student's performance at mid-term. Progress reports are not as precisely calculated as grades, but the narrative descriptors can help students and parents identify areas of strength and weakness so that steps can be taken to maintain or improve performance before the end of the term.

When entering progress reports in our computer system, teachers include 1) an "achievement" comment and 2) either two additional standard comments OR an individualized "write in" comment for each student. The achievement comment provides an overall sense of the student's performance. Additional comments are then used to offer more detailed explanation. A complete listing of standard comments is attached.

Arts teachers who teach semester-long (half-year) courses (physical education, band, chorus, general music, orchestra, reading, culinary arts) issue their progress reports at least once during the semester. Grades for these classes are sent home with trimester 2 progress reports.

Part II: FAQs

The following questions and answers should help you navigate and respond to your child's progress reports.

1. How should I interpret the achievement comments? Are they the same as grades?

While some teachers use rough grade equivalents to determine achievement comments, others take a more holistic approach. The following chart can help you get a sense of how to interpret the achievement comments.

COMMENT	EXPLANATION
excellent achievement	<i>Student is exceeding class expectations.</i> Homework is consistently completed on time and of high quality, AND/OR performance on tests and other assessments has consistently earned "A" range grades, AND/OR class participation is excellent.
good achievement	<i>Student is meeting class expectations.</i> Homework is consistently completed, although quality and timeliness may have room for improvement, AND/OR performance on tests and other assessments has earned primarily "B" range grades, AND/OR class participation is solid.
fair achievement	<i>Student is meeting some but not all class expectations.</i> Homework is turned in but tends to be late, incomplete or of poor quality, AND/OR performance on tests and other assessments has earned primarily "B-" or "C" range grades, AND/OR class participation is inconsistent.
unsatisfactory achievement/ in danger of failing	<i>Student is not meeting class expectations.</i> Homework is missing, late, or poor quality, AND/OR performance on some tests and assessments has earned "C-" or "D" or lower grades, AND/OR class participation is inconsistent, AND/OR poor class behavior is impacting performance.

2. What should I do if my child receives a comment that he doesn't understand? (For example, he receives the comment "needs to spend more time on homework," but he isn't sure why.)
Please encourage your child to approach his or her teacher at an appropriate time (before school, after class or during X-Block) to discuss the comment. Then, make a follow-up call or send an email to the teacher directly.
3. What should I do if a comment is either missing or incorrect?
Please contact your child's teacher directly if an error needs to be corrected.
4. I am concerned about my child's overall academic performance—she doesn't seem to be living up to her potential. What steps can I take to help her? What can the school do?
First, have a conversation with your child about what her goals are. Unless she wants to improve, it will be very hard for anyone to help her. Next, make sure she has a good work space and a good work routine at home, and talk with her about ways you can help her make a habit out of completing her work. Finally, contact your child's team leader about your concern. He or she can work with the team to identify specific areas of concern and provide additional in-school support.
5. My child seems to be working very hard but his progress report includes "fair" and "unsatisfactory" achievement comments in several classes. I am afraid he will get frustrated and discouraged.
Contact your child's guidance counselor. The counselor can talk with you in more depth about what you are seeing at home, and give you some good advice about next steps.
6. Based on her progress report, I think my child might be in the wrong math level.
Talk with your child about your concern and the idea of a change. If you are in agreement that a level change would be positive, then contact your child's math teacher to discuss the possibility. Remember that a level change is a schedule change, so your child should be prepared to switch at least two of her classes.
7. My child does not seem to have much homework, but he received "excellent" achievement comments. I am afraid he isn't being appropriately challenged.
Talk with your child about his experience of school so far. If he feels the work is too easy in a particular class or in several classes, contact the specific teacher or the team leader.
8. I lost the copy of my child's progress report that needs to be signed and returned to school.
You can send a hand-written note to school indicating that you have seen and reviewed you child's report. If you would like a new copy, please contact the main office (x2336).
9. My former spouse and I would both like to receive copies of my child's progress reports and report cards, but currently only one is sent home.
Contact Thurston's main office (x2336) to make sure we have both addresses in our student database.
10. My child often has questions about her homework that I am not sure how to answer.
Talk with your child about visiting teachers during X-Block, and contact the specific teacher or the team leader for additional support.

Part III: **PROGRESS REPORT COMMENTS**

The following list includes all possible pre-written comments that teachers may include on progress reports. Teachers are limited to three standard comments per student. In addition, a teacher can choose to write in one individualized comment per student.

Conduct

- 01. excellent attitude
- 02. positive attitude
- 03. excellent conduct
- 04. good conduct
- 05. pleasure to have in class
- 06. shows positive leadership
- 07. helpful to others
- 08. demonstrates responsibility
- 09. poor attitude
- 10. poor conduct
- 11. disruptive behavior in class
- 12. behavior needs improvement
- 13. too talkative in class
- 14. needs to show respect for school property
- 15. socializing inhibits classwork
- 16. needs to be on time for class
- 17. needs to follow class rules
- 18. does not accept constructive criticism

Effort

- 19. excellent effort
- 20. good effort
- 21. shows improvement
- 22. shows enthusiasm for subject
- 23. strong work habits
- 24. conscientious worker
- 25. self starter
- 26. more effort needed
- 27. did not seek help
- 28. inconsistent effort/quality of work
- 29. capable of better work
- 30. needs extra help
- 31. did not take opportunity to improve grade
- 32. did not make up work
- 33. did not make up work when absent

Achievement

- 37. good work
- 38. steady improvement and growth
- 39. demonstrates creativity
- 40. performing above grade level
- 43. meets minimal course requirements
- 44. low quiz/test scores
- 45. missing quiz/test scores
- 46. weaknesses in basic skills
- 47. absences are affecting grade
- 48. performing below grade level

Participation

- 49. works well with others
- 50. good listening skills
- 51. follows directions well
- 52. stays on task
- 53. attentive, uses time wisely
- 54. works well independently
- 55. active class participation
- 56. thoughtful contributor to class discussion
- 57. needs to improve note-taking
- 58. should improve listening skills
- 59. does not follow directions well
- 60. distracted, inattentive/needs to be redirected often
- 61. difficulty working cooperatively with peers
- 62. should participate more

Preparedness

- 63. comes to class prepared
- 64. needs to come to class prepared
- 65. lacks organization
- 66. does not bring necessary materials
- 67. does not use assignment book effectively

Homework

- 68. assignments thoughtfully completed
- 69. consistently completes homework
- 70. needs to spend more time on homework
- 71. homework missing, incomplete or late
- 72. major assignments/projects missing, incomplete or late
- 73. poor study habits
- 74. study habits need improvement

Subject

- 75. graded on individual achievement
- 76. uses foreign language outside classroom
- 77. good accent in target language
- 78. displays good sportsmanship
- 79. excused for medical reasons
- 80. good written work
- 81. good quality lab work
- 82. good problem solving skills
- 83. difficulty in expressing ideas
- 84. difficulty comprehending subject matter
- 85. writing not detailed/complete
- 86. needs to work on accent in target language
- 87. displays poor sportsmanship
- 88. does not make good use of learning center time
- 89. journal work not completed
- 90. journal work needs improvement
- 91. needs to proofread work carefully
- 92. weak written work
- 93. lab work needs improvement
- 94. problem-solving skills need improvement
- 95. needs to show all steps and work
- 96. computational skills need improvement
- 97. work needs to be neat and legible