



# A Parent's Guide to Elementary Progress Reports

## Our Commitment to Providing the Best Information About Student Learning

### *Of Note:*

- **Progress Reports in Worthington are posted online** for parents/students three times each year at the conclusion of each 12-week marking period ("trimester").
- Parents can access their student's Progress Reports by logging into the Worthington Schools' website,
  - ⇒ select the "Log In" icon,
  - ⇒ next select "Infinite Campus",
  - ⇒ then choose "Reports" and
  - ⇒ select "Elementary"

This guide has been created to provide parents with the following information about Student Progress Reports in the Worthington School District:

- An overview of philosophy and purpose
- An explanation of how to use and interpret the WCS elementary progress report, including the Standards-Based design and its connection to the Worthington Courses of Study and the Ohio's Content Standards
- An explanation of how to use and interpret the marking scale

- Answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about progress reporting and report cards

Reporting student progress is an essential part of the communication and partnership process between home and school. It is our professional responsibility to provide parents and students with complete and useful information that thoughtfully reflects the fullness of the learning process. Namely, parents and students require information that accurately reflects a student's level of performance and progress in meeting academic standards.

The report card provides a "snapshot" of student learning that reflects grade-level expectations and standards, student achievement of and progress toward independently meeting expectations, and indications of where help and support are needed.

**Learning** is the message we wish to communicate to both parents and students. Students should be evaluated on their individual progress toward achieving the standards and skills of their grade level.

## Belief Statement for Assessing and Reporting Student Progress

*In Worthington Schools, we believe that assessing and reporting student progress is important. Evaluating student progress takes place daily through a variety of tasks, work samples, and assessments including observations of student performance. Assessment information helps to guide student learning, as well as teachers' instruction in meeting each student's needs in the process of learning.*

*Explicit feedback and guidance to families supports each student's opportunity for success in meeting standards and achieving his/her potential.*



## Understanding the Standards "Marking Key"

To be fair and accurate in reporting both a student's progress and achievement in each academic area, teachers use the marking key pictured below to report individual progress with the content standards in each academic area.

Four levels of progress are noted using a numeric (number 1-4) marking system. In the Marking Key, the numbers themselves are not the focus. Rather, the descriptor that coincides with each number is most important. The descriptors indicate the **level of the individual student's skill acquisition**, as well as the **level of confidence/independence with which the student performs** the standard.

*The Standards Marking Key is used in all grades, Kindergarten through Fifth Grade.*

*The 1-4 key is used to report student progress related to both the level of expectation that is being met, as well as the level of independence with which a student performs.*

A mark of "4" indicates the "next level" of student learning. A student's progress exceeds grade-level because s/he has mastered grade-level standards in terms of knowledge, but also applies that knowledge in ways that go beyond grade-level expectations. Typically, few children perform consistently at this level across all standards..

A mark of "3" *is our expectation* and indicates that a student's progress with skills and information meets grade-level expectations because content is mastered and applied independently with little or no adult support. A student at the top of his/her class, successfully mastering skills and content, may find themselves consistently at level "3", indicating strong or excellent work at grade-level.

MARKING KEY	
The number and its descriptor indicate the level at which a student is progressing on any standard	
<b>4</b>	Student consistently exceeds and extends grade level expectations independently demonstrating in-depth knowledge, self-motivation, and a higher order thinking skills.
<b>3</b>	Student consistently meets grade level expectations with independence. ("3" indicates the <b>EXPECTED level of performance for any student at any grade level.</b> )
<b>2</b>	Student is working at or near basic understanding of grade level expectations, with support.
<b>1</b>	Student is working below grade level expectations while requiring ongoing interventions/support.

A mark of "2" indicates a student's progress with skills and content that is in the grade-level range, but requires the support and assistance of others to show success at this time. The learning is not yet independently applied.

A mark of "1" indicates that a student's progress with grade-level content is below expectations. His/her instructional level is characterized by maximum teacher support and intervention. Grade-level expectations are not being met at this time.

### Important Points to Consider:

- Marks of "2" and "3" are both considered within the grade level range of expected student performance. The difference, again, is in the level of support required for growth. One would expect most students to be marked at "2" or "3" in most areas, if they are performing at grade level.
- When considering the descriptors, very few students would earn a "4" consistently on most indicators. Carefully read the details of the explanation. A "3" indicates strong, successful learning at any grade level.

# The Purpose of The Progress Report

## Purpose of the Progress Report

The purpose of the Worthington Schools' Progress Report is to communicate the status of individual learning to students and their families.

Therefore, the student progress report should:

- Be clearly understood by teachers, students, and families
- Be a concise and consistent communication of student performance and growth over time, based upon the Ohio Learning Standards
- Promote ongoing conversation between schools and families in supporting each student and his/her success

## “So, why don't we just use 'grades' like we used to?”

Learning in elementary school has always been more heavily focused on the process of learning than on the content. It is at elementary school that students develop the critical thinking and processes for knowing that are essential to academic success in a larger context.

In elementary school we have, for the most part, made the switch away from letter grades in order to communicate *more specifically* what a student has learned and achieved based upon learning standards and to what degree s/he has learned them.

While letter grades seem understandable, they give only limited information about what children

have learned or can do, dependent on teacher and parent interpretation. Grades do not often reveal understanding and application.

Consider the typical “average” of numbers to determine a “grade.” A test grade, which is the final result of learning, is averaged with earlier quizzes and other assignments that reflect “practice” or formative assessment along the way. A final test grade of “A” could actually be lowered by the averaging, and not reflective of the true, final learning.

With a standards-based approach and this defined marking key, teachers use information from

observations, conferences, work samples and assessments to evaluate student learning against specific learning expectations. That information, when discussed with parents and students, gives a more detailed picture of what a child has learned, can do, and to what degree.

In Worthington, we introduce intermediate-aged elementary students to the grades that are historically part of secondary school. We believe that paired with the standards descriptors, we provide a more specific picture of the grade, as well as the student learning.

In addition, this marking key can help to identify direction and future learning goals.

*“...traditional report cards say too little about the specific tasks the student has actually done, and to what specific and verifiable level of performance. Adding a single letter grade helps very little; the parent still does not know whether the grade represents relative or absolute achievement.”*

—Grant Wiggins, author of [Understanding by Design](#)

It is important to know that the standards indicators listed for each content area represent ***END OF GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS.***

A teacher's assessment for any indicator reflects how the student is currently performing in relation to the end of year expectation.

- A student receiving a “3” at the second trimester means they are meeting the end of year expectation at that time.
- A student receiving a “2” means the student is working on grade level expectations, with support. They are working at grade level, but have not mastered the expectation independently at that time.

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**Our Mission: To empower a community of  
learners who will change the world.**

**Curriculum Guides Found at:**  
www.worthington.k12.oh.us

## Frequently Asked Questions...

**“How will I know if my student is at the top of THIS class?”** Recall that the numeric marking system is not intended to reflect the overall make up of the current classroom. It is a scale that reflects standards expectations and **individual achievement**. Working at the “top” of a current class, in relation to grade level expectations, may still be a “3”. A “4” indicates a student is mastering grade level expectations, but ALSO is applying/using that knowledge independently in ways that **exceed** grade level expectations. **A comment may highlight the excellence and quality of work being achieved by your student, and is the way to offer specific feedback that honors his/her accomplishment.**

**“Can you provide an example of how to make sense of a “4”?”** “ Let’s try! Suppose that the grade level standard calls for measuring to the closest inch, and you are additionally working on “area.” Some kids struggle. Some kids easily measure to the inch and are “content” calculating simple 2-dimensional area. Let’s say that little Sigmund, who is quite able, not only needs more, but seeks your challenge as a teacher. You challenge Sigmund to apply his skills to the mulch bed around the tetherball pole. He can transfer to taking the 28 inch by 72 inch mulch bed, noticing that with the border it is also 10 inches deep. He calculates that area and works with cubic inches — and explains his understanding. Sigmund gets a “4” — he has gone well beyond the expectations of the grade level, and to a place that other students need not/do not even attempt to go at this time. The “4” is not about the amount of work Sigmund does, but, rather, how he applies his learning at a higher level.

**“How do teachers communicate WHAT is “covered” in the marking period or the shift in expectations from marking period to marking period?”** Because each classroom in our district is unique, we have not standardized this type of information or a protocol for sharing it. Teachers throughout the district have individual and distinct ways to communicate with their families, according to their own style. We have left this area open to personal choices such as weekly/monthly newsletters, blog posts, email blasts, etc. The progress report comment boxes are not intended to be a curriculum update; they are intended to be specific feedback about individual students and their learning.

**“Isn’t it hard to mark progress for students who don’t turn in work but are on grade level?”** Not as the report is designed. The content indicator boxes are based on standards with end-of-year expectations. IF the student is performing, overall, on grade level with the standard, a teacher marks the box with a “3”. In the comment section for that content area, a teacher may note that punctuality/responsibility for work is an area where improvement is needed. A parent may also refer to specific and appropriate boxes in the “Behaviors/Personal Achievement” section of the report. Achievement of a standard should not be about compliance with routines or rules.

**“Do number grades give parents an idea if their child is on grade level or not, especially if they have both 2’s and 3’s in an area?”** “ Again, remember that these are not “grades.” For example, as the reading section is broken out, it is logical that a child could have both 2’s and 3’s, and the DESCRIPTORS, not the numbers, DO tell a parent to what degree the child is on grade level. Both “2” and “3” are “on grade” level; the difference is the extent to which they have mastered the standard and to what degree of independence. A comment may further explain specific areas where the “2” is not yet at grade level performance expectation.

**“Where are HEALTH marks recorded?”** “ While waiting for health curriculum revisions, teachers will mark health progress with the “4,3,2,1” scale in the “Physical Education and Wellness” section, using the space **“Exhibits knowledge and learning for making choices for physical health.”**