

OAK PARK DISTRICT 97

THE ELEMENTARY REPORT CARD - GRADES 1-5

FAMILY GUIDE

This guide was designed for families of Oak Park District 97 elementary school students. It is a resource to help families understand how we grade and report student achievement.

Here are some responses to questions you might have:

How do we report student achievement in District 97?

Assessing student achievement has been a national discussion for many years now. Here in District 97 we have been focused on developing a grading and reporting system that reflects the best thinking on this topic. In 2003-04, with the help of parents and staff across the district, we introduced a standards-based report card. This report card assures that all students are being assessed on the same criteria and grading scale district-wide. In compliance with federal, state, and District 97 Board of Education expectations, the report card reflects how students are performing compared to state and district standards.

What does the report card tell us?

The report card, distributed at the end of each trimester, is a summative evaluation of student achievement and performance. It reports what students know and are able to do at a particular point in time. Because the report card is cumulative through the year, progress and growth can be observed from one report to the next.

Important features of the report card include:

- Progress on exhibiting the district's Essential Qualities of a Lifelong Learner
- Separate evaluations for personal development/study skills, academic achievement, and effort
- District standards and benchmarks which have been aligned with the seven Illinois State Goals for Learning: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, fine arts, physical development, and world language -- Spanish

What grading method does the report card use?

Through grading, teachers convert descriptive information and various measures of a student's performance into grades, marks, or narrative reports that summarize their assessment of a student's accomplishments. All grading methods are intended to communicate a teacher's evaluative appraisal of a student's achievement and performance (Guskey, 2002). We use a four-point scale to describe the student's level of academic performance in all subject areas. The report card also describes the student's performance on specific skills/benchmarks and effort. A comments section provides narrative information.

Level of Performance	Skills/Benchmarks	Effort
4 - Exceeds Grade Level Standards	E - Excellent	E - Excellent
3 - Meets Grade Level Standards	S - Successful	S - Satisfactory
2 - Below Grade Level Standards	NI - Needs Improvement	NI - Needs Improvement
1 - Academic Warning		

How is student work graded?

Throughout the trimester, when you look at your child’s assignments and assessments, you will see the same kinds of marks that are used on the report card. Depending on the work, you may see a four-point scale or a grade of E, S, or NI. You may also see a raw score indicating the number correct out of the number of items on the assignment or assessment. At times, you will see comments that give your child more detailed information on the quality of his/her work. We believe that this grading system is more informative and accurate than using a fixed percentage system and letter grades.

How is the report card grade determined?

When it comes time to decide the report card grade, teachers have to answer the question: Is the student doing grade level work? As they look through their gradebook, they find the student’s most consistent level of achievement and are guided by the following descriptions of each performance level.

Report Card Performance Level Descriptions			
4 Exceeds Grade Level Standards	3 Meets Grade Level Standards	2 Below Grade Level Standards	1 Academic Warning
<p><i>Consistently</i> exceeds district grade level performance expectations</p> <p>Demonstrates an exceptional level of understanding of skills and concepts taught</p> <p>Is independent and self-directed in extending the learning process</p> <p><i>Consistently</i> makes connections, transfers and applies knowledge, and displays critical thinking skills</p>	<p><i>Consistently</i> meets district grade level performance expectations</p> <p>Demonstrates a consistent understanding of skills and concepts taught</p> <p><i>Regularly</i> performs without further direction or support</p>	<p>Does not <i>consistently</i> meet district grade level performance expectations</p> <p>Demonstrates partial understanding of skills and concepts taught</p> <p>Often requires teacher assistance to complete grade level work</p>	<p><i>Consistently</i> performs significantly below district grade level expectations</p> <p>Demonstrates limited understanding of skills and concepts taught</p> <p>Has difficulty completing grade level work even with teacher assistance or intervention</p>

“It is particularly important that the highest level be attainable by students achieving at grade level. For example, the highest level at, say grade 4, does not mean that students have to be achieving at a grade 5 level.”
O’Connor, 2002

How else can parents learn about their student’s progress?

While the report card is the most traditional way to report student progress, in District 97 student learning and accomplishments are reported regularly and in a variety of ways, including conferences, progress reports, phone calls, written correspondence, portfolios or exhibits of student work, and/or standardized test reports. We value the home partnership and encourage you to contact your child’s teacher to discuss the report card or specific areas of your child’s achievement in detail.

Guskey, T.R. and J. M. Bailey. (2001). Developing grading and reporting systems for student learning. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

O’Connor, K. (2002). How to grade for learning: Linking grades to standards. Glenview, IL: Pearson Skylight.