

## **A Standards-Based Approach to Reporting Student Achievement**

The Diocese of Orlando report cards for Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade are fully standards-based. Standards-based grading means that students are measured against a set of curriculum standards – expectations – for each core subject area. With this system of reporting, parents know exactly what their child is learning in each trimester and whether their child is “on track” with grade level, school and Diocesan academic expectations.

### **What are Standards?**

Academic standards are simply the statements that describe the expectation of what a student should know (*content*) and/or be able to do (*skills*) by a certain point in a student’s academic development. For example, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Math standard states that a student should be able to “*Add up to four two-digit numbers using strategies based on place value and properties of operations.*” This standard is expected to be mastered by the *completion* of the second grade.

Standards are *not* curriculum, nor do standards dictate how skill or knowledge should be taught; standards are simply developmentally appropriate learning objectives.

Curriculum standards for all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Orlando are based upon a blended model of standards including National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECESS), the Diocese of Orlando Faith Formation Standards, the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics and the Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. Our curriculum is developed through the following process: ALL Catholic Schools in the Diocese (as well as the state and in numerous Dioceses around the country) are accountable to the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECESS)

[http://www.catholicstandards.org/files/Catholic\\_School\\_Standards\\_03-12.pdf](http://www.catholicstandards.org/files/Catholic_School_Standards_03-12.pdf)

Next, our Diocesan Faith Formation Standards represent the content and skills for the instruction of our faith and is the lens through which all other content and skills standards are reviewed for use in our schools. The academic content and skills standards we review and use are the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics and the Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for all other content areas. Secular content must be consistent with our Catholic identity.

### **What are Benchmarks?**

Within each curriculum standard are a series of specific indicators or “targets”, called benchmarks. Benchmarks are the indicators that the standards are being met. Mastery of benchmark skills are assessed throughout the school year. An example of a benchmark for the standard listed above would be: “*By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> marking period, the student can consistently and accurately explain place value as it relates to the addition of three two-digit numbers.*”

## **What is the difference between the traditional report card grades and a standards-based report card?**

Letter or numeral grades do not tell parents which skills their child has mastered or where he or she is working at grade level. Letter or number grades do not show what skills or knowledge is missing; i.e. if a student earns a "B" in Math, that "B" does not tell a parent what the child missed that would have earned him or her "A." The Standards-Based report card informs how well an individual student is doing in relation to the grade level standards and expectations. This will give parents a better understanding of their child's strengths and weakness, allowing for the specific identification for areas where a child can be more challenged or in what areas a child might need specific remediation.

## **What does the Proficiency scale mean? What is *Proficient, Developing Proficiency, etc.*?**

A proficiency scale represents a student's progress toward mastery of the standards. The student's level of proficiency is what is now reported on our new reports cards in the Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades. Teachers use a variety of measures; i.e. class work, homework, quizzes, tests, projects to determine proficiency. Students' grades are *not* determined by computing percent correct divided by number of questions. A "P" does not mean the same as an "A", nor does it have a scoring range of 90-100%. Rather, each child is assessed based on the evidence shown in his or her work. Mastery is determined by how consistently and accurately the student's work demonstrates his or her level of proficiency.

Earning a "P" means the student has proficient understanding and meets grade-level expectations *for the indicated trimester*. That student demonstrates their knowledge and/or skill consistently and accurately through a variety of measures. Consistency and accuracy are the primary indicators of proficiency or mastery. We want all of our students to reach the level of full proficiency; full proficiency should be expected at the end of the school year as standards represent what the expectation for the completion of the grade level. A student receiving a "P" is right on track with our high academic expectations. ***Proficiency is something to be celebrated!***

Earning a "DP" means the student is Developing Proficiency but is *not yet consistently and/or accurately* meeting grade level expectations for this trimester. A student receiving a "DP" understands the basic concepts or skills, but has not yet produced work that provides evidence that the knowledge and/or skill are mastered; i.e. the student has not demonstrated consistency or accuracy.

Earning an "EP" means the student is beginning to show progress/understanding but is not yet meeting grade level expectations for this trimester. A student receiving a "EP" is likely just learning a new skill or a new body of knowledge.

A student receiving an "IP" is demonstrating insufficient progress/understanding and is significantly below grade level for this trimester. Students earning an "IP" need targeted remediation help to learn and stay on track with expectations. Because we are now reporting the standards, parents/guardians will know exactly in what areas their student needs remediation. *This is an important benefit of standards-based grading.*

### **What is “Advanced Proficiency”?**

Earning “AP” means the student has advanced proficient understanding *and exceeds grade-level expectations*. An “AP” is designed to provide academically gifted students challenge within the regular classroom. An “AP” is difficult to achieve as it represents two critical indicators: 1) the student has demonstrated full proficiency of all current grade level standards in a particular content area(s), and 2) the student is being taught using standards that are above his/her current grade level.

### **How Do Teachers Determine Proficiency Levels?**

Throughout the trimester, teachers assess students with the standards for that grade level in mind. They measure the current knowledge of the child, evidence of student performance, and compare these to what the child is expected to know or be able to do.

### **What about behavior? How is that reported?**

Under each content area, there is a “drop down” field for comments. Behavior is reported there. While behavior is an extremely important aspect of a student’s growth and development, it should not be reported with a grade that reflects a learning expectation. For example, simply because a student talked out of turn in class doesn’t have any bearing on whether that student understands multiplication.

### **Are all grades going to move to standards-based report cards?**

No. The standards-based report card will be utilized only for the primary grades of K-2. These grade levels represent foundational skills. In grades 3 through 8, schools in the Diocese of Orlando will continue to use traditional letter or numerical grades but will eventually include standards listed on those report cards in an effort to provide parents with more information. Thus, students in grades 3 through 8 will have a grade *and* parents will also see the standards listed.

### **Is this change connected to the Common Core?**

No. Standards-based grading and reporting has in use in schools – including Catholic schools – for decades, long before Common Core existed.

**If you have any questions about your child’s assessments or report cards,  
please contact your child’s teacher.**