



Empowering Parents With Progress Reports

Hilliard City School District
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
2140 Atlas Street
Columbus, Ohio 43228

HCS D Vision Statement

Hilliard City Schools will Embrace, Empower and Inspire students, families and community in an active partnership.

HCS D Mission Statement

Hilliard City Schools will ensure that every student is Ready For Tomorrow.

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

- An overview of philosophy and purpose.
- An explanation of how to use and interpret the Hilliard Elementary Progress Reports.
- Answers to some of the most frequently asked questions.

Reporting student progress is an essential part of the communication and partnership process between home and school. It is the responsibility of the Hilliard City School District to provide parents and students with complete and useful information that thoughtfully reflects the fullness of the learning process.

Learning is the message we wish to send to both student and parent. Students should be evaluated on their individual progress in achieving grade level expectations and state standards for learning.

Special point of interest:

Progress reports for Hilliard elementary school students are made available online in *Home Access Center* to parents three times each school year, at the conclusion of the 12 week marking periods.

Where to find your child's Progress Report

Student Progress Reports will be published through your personalized and secure Hilliard City Schools *Home Access Center*. A hard copy will not be sent home with students. The *Home Access Center* is available at <https://homeaccess.hboe.org/> or by visiting the district's home page at <http://www.hilliardschools.org> and clicking on the "Parents" tab. Should you have any questions, or if you don't have means to review progress reports online, please contact your child's school office as the district will continue to print progress reports for families that do not have adequate internet access.

Understanding the “Academic Grading Scale”

To be fair in reporting a student’s progress and growth in each academic area, teachers use the “Academic Grading Scale” pictured below to mark individual progress in academic areas, wellness and personal achievement.

Four levels of progress are noted using a numeric (numbers 1-4) marking system. In the academic grading scale, 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 student’s skill acquisition and the confidence/independence with which the student performs the skill.

The numeric marking system (1, 2, 3, 4) is not significant in itself. Rather, the description found under each number is the focus and meaning of the mark.

Academic Grading Scale

Mark	Description
1	Beginning; Progressing with emerging awareness of concepts and skills
2	Developing; Progressing toward basic understanding of concepts and skills at grade level with assistance from teachers, peers, and/or parents
3	Achieving; Demonstrating grade level expectations for concepts and skills while achieving independence
4	Extending; Exceeds grade level expectations by applying concepts and skills independently and utilizing them with independence in innovative ways
N/A	Blank space indicates not evaluated this marking period

Beginning (1) indicates a student’s progress with new skills/information at an instructional level characterized by maximum teacher support. Typically, fewer than 3% of children at any grade would be at this level.

Developing (2) indicates a student’s progress with skills and concepts at grade level, while developing understanding and needing the moderate support of teachers, parents, and/or peers.

Achieving (3) indicates a student’s progress with skills and concepts at **grade level understanding and expectation**, requiring little teacher, parent, or peer support because independence in applying knowledge and skills has been achieved. A student, at the top of his/her class, successfully mastering grade level content knowledge and skills, may find themselves at level “3” throughout the school year, which indicates strong or excellent work, at grade level.

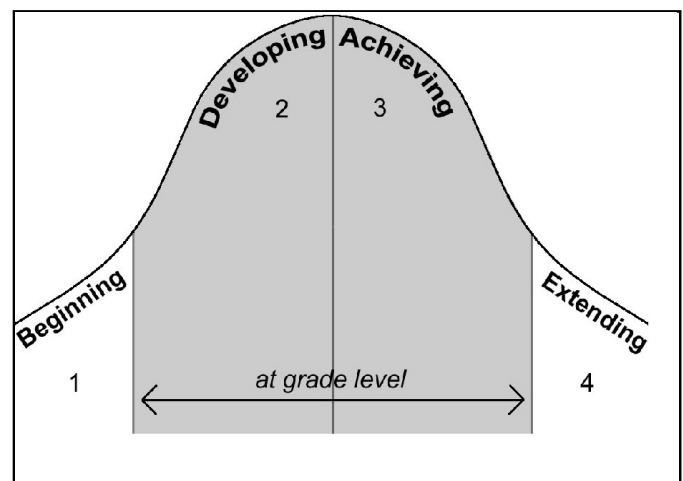
Extending (4) indicates the “next level” of student learning. Again, one could expect to find fewer than 3% of children reaching this level of performance. At the “extending” level, the student has mastered grade-level expectations in terms of knowledge, but uses and applies his/her knowledge and learning in ways that go beyond grade-level expectations in terms of innovation and application at that point in time.

To understand the 1, 2, 3 and 4 markings another way, consider the traditional “bell curve”, pictured at right. **Beginning (1)**, is found at the lowest quartile. Considered below grade level or emerging, one might expect to find 3% or less of students performing at that level.

Developing (2) and Achieving (3), found at the center of the bell curve, would both be considered **at grade level**. Approximately 94% of all students would be expected to perform at these levels. Students who are “developing” would be working at grade level, but with adult/peer support needed. Students who are “achieving” would be working at grade level, independently.

Extending (4), would be found at the highest quartile. Again, 3% or less of students would be working at this level, which is performing above grade level in knowledge, application, and independence.

Both “2” and “3” are considered “ON TARGET” in terms of grade level expectations, with varying levels of support.



“So, why don’t we use letter grades in the elementary school?”

“...[traditional] report cards say too little about the specific tasks the student has actually done or not 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

We made a switch from letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) at the elementary level in order to communicate *more specifically* what a student has learned, achieved and to what degree.

While letter grades seem “understandable” to parents, they give only limited information about what children have learned or can do. Grades are also dependent on teacher and parent interpretation, and focused on surface knowledge rather than understandings. Consider an “average” of numbers to determine a grade. The “test” grade, which is the final result of learning, is averaged with earlier quizzes that reflect the “practice” and diagnostic learning along the way. A final test score of “A” could actually be lowered by the averaging, and not reflective of “final learning.”

With the Hilliard progress reporting system, we use information from observations, conferences, and a child’s actual work to make an assessment against specific learning indicators that describe a child’s learning and understanding. That information, when discussed with parents, gives a more detailed picture of what a child can do, as well as identifies future learning goals.

Questions Most Frequently Asked by Parents About Our Progress Reports

How do I help my child “get a 4”? Remember that a mark of three indicates that a student is meeting grade level expectations with independence and excellence. **With high and challenging expectations, a three is exactly where a competent student should be, at grade level.** “Getting a 4” is not about what *more* a student does, but, rather, about what a student knows, and at what level s/he applies what s/he knows to new and higher level situations that “exceed grade level expectations.” The shift in thinking from the A, B, C, D, F letter grades is that “3” is the top—for the grade level — and should be celebrated as such.

How is it possible for my child to “drop” from one mark to another? First, it is important to note that the student does not “drop”. The number is an indication of performance with expectations that increase consistently throughout the school year. The student may be working on grade level during the second marking period, but with increased expectations and requiring more teacher support, the number speaks more specifically about the level of independence with which the student is performing the grade level task at that point in time.

Does reporting progress in this way only benefit low achievers by bringing everyone to the “middle?” We don’t believe this to be true. Many parents fear that by not giving letter grades, the intention for all students is to gain the same level of learning. The opposite is actually true. Letter grades are tied to a percentage, and students who already “know” gain higher percentages throughout their learning. Letter grades do not encourage students to extend their learning. By using standards, we identify the expected or minimum standard, and teachers encourage their students to exceed them.

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Department of Curriculum and Instruction
2140 Atlas Street
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David Stewart, Superintendent
Sharee Wells, Assistant Superintendent
Mike McDonough, Deputy Superintendent
Cori Kindl, Executive Director of Curriculum
Samantha Althouse, Director of Secondary Curriculum
Herb Higginbotham, Director of Elementary Education
Mark Tremayne, Director - Innovative Learning Center

**If you have questions about understanding the Hilliard Elementary Progress Report,
please call a member of the Curriculum and Instruction Department at:**

**Phone: 614-921-7053
Fax: 614-921-7001**