



# ROYAL OAK SCHOOLS

A COMMUNITY OF EXCELLENCE

## **Standards: What do they really mean?**

Standards provide focus for the work of students, teachers, and parents. Our standards are meant to prepare our students to be productive citizens in a rapidly changing world that demands critical thinking and problem solving. Our standards—and the curriculum experiences leading to those standards—combine a deep understanding of subject matter with the capacity to apply what has been learned in real world situations. They communicate to parents, students, teachers and the community the expectations we hold for student learning.

## **What is a standards based report card?**

A standards based report card highlights the most important skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade level. In our elementary schools, students receive marks that report student progress toward meeting content and performance standards four times a year. Benchmarks for each of the marking periods are used to determine if a student is progressing toward the end of the year standards.

## **What are the proficiency levels on the report card?**

The proficiency level represents a students' progress on the report card. There are four categories, 1-4, located in the assessment key.

4-Earning a “4” means the student has excelled at grade level expectations. The student consistently excels standards as demonstrated by a body of evidence showing a greater depth of understanding and flexible application of grade level concepts. A “4” is difficult to obtain and indicates unusually high achievement.

3-Earning a “3” means the students shows proficient progress and meets grade level expectations. The student demonstrates understanding of grade level skills and concepts. A student receiving a “3” is right on track with our high academic expectations.

2-Earning a “2” means the student is developing the skills and concepts but has not reached all of them yet. The student understands basic concepts and may need some extra time to practice/understand that concept or skill.

1-Earning a “1” means the student has an area of concern. The student is not meeting grade level expectations and is showing no progress toward meeting the expectation.

### **What is a "standard" and where are they located on each of the new report cards?**

Report cards for each grade level include a variety of subject areas such as math, English Language Arts (ELA), science, social studies, music, art, foreign language, and physical education. Under each subject area, is a breakdown of the "standards" or expectations for student learning and achievement tied to those subject areas. These standards are written in a parent-friendly format. Your student receives proficiency scores for each standard to indicate his/her progress in a subject area.

### **How does the new report card format show a child's academic performance?**

The proficiency score assigned to each standard shows a parent how well his/her child is progressing in a specific skill of a subject area.

### **Overcoming standard based challenges**

The greatest difference from standards-based grading is moving away from the notion of “excellence” by using percentages and/or A’s and B’s. Our goal for all children is that they get all 3’s! A 3 should NOT be looked at as a B. Previously, the student who came prepared, or participated, or did homework earned points for those essential activities. As a result his/her grade was falsely inflated, when in reality, those activities do not necessarily denote skill mastery. Therefore, such skills as listening and completing homework are no longer part of standards-based grading, but are reflected in work habits.