



St. Margaret
of Scotland School
Saint Louis, Missouri

Standards Based Grading

Report Cards

A Parents' Guide

2020-2021

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Standards Based Report Card (SBG) FAQs

Q: What do the terms Curriculum Based, Standards Based, or Skill Based mean?

A: Curriculum Based, Standards Based, and Skill Based are similar terms used to describe a method for achieving student grades. Standards, or skills, specify what all students should know and be able to do by the end of the school year. The State and National Standards have been developed by the Missouri and United States Departments of Education.

The term “Standards Based” is the most often used term because public schools are using the State and National Standards along with the Common Core as their curriculum. Since St. Margaret of Scotland is a Catholic school, we are free to determine our own curriculum. The Missouri State Standards, as well as the National Standards, are the base of our curriculum. However, we are not limited to these standards the way public schools are. We have developed, and annually revise, a curriculum we feel best serves our students.

Q: How is standards based grading different from traditional grading?

A: In the traditional 100-point grading system, a student’s grades are typically based on all of the work assigned in class, including class work, homework, projects, quizzes, and tests. These scores are often arranged in the grade book, and given more or less points based on their perceived value rather than on the essential standards for the class. The grade may also include points for non-academic factors, such as participation, effort, or attitude.

Standards based grading does not separate tests, homework, or projects. All of the work a student does is used to assess the student’s mastery of the essential curriculum. Student scores are tracked by the standards, which gives the teacher, student, and parent a very detailed picture of which standards a student has learned. Non-academic factors like behavior, attitude, and attendance are not included in this grade but are reported in the SMOS Charism section of the report card.

Q: What is the difference between a traditional and standards based report card?

TRADITIONAL REPORT CARD	STANDARDS BASED REPORT CARD
If a student did poorly on work in the beginning of the course, but then was able to fully understand the concepts that were presented, the student would be penalized as all scores are averaged into a final grade.	Although grades are given throughout the course, the student’s final grade is determined by how well they understand the standard at the end of the quarter. The grades are not averaged with any other standards as to give parents a more detailed and accurate view of how the child is progressing academically.
Assessment based on teacher-defined criteria	Assessments based on the SMOS curriculum
Grades are given for each subject area, such as reading, writing, math, etc.	Subject areas are sub-divided into a list of concepts/skills that students should master. Each item on the list is scored.
Work habits may be calculated in the letter grade (missing assignments, late work, homework, effort, etc.)	Work habits (SMOS Charisms) are reported separately and are not calculated in students’ proficiency towards a standard.
Measures how well students do in comparison to their classmates.	Measures how well an individual student is doing in relation to the grade-level standards. This will give parents a better understanding of their child’s strengths and weaknesses and encourage all students to do their best.
Gives a compiled grade for work completed in a subject area. (ex: Reading=B, Math=C, etc.)	Measures how well each student is progressing in relation to each of the grade-level standards.

Q: Why is St. Margaret of Scotland using a Standards Based Grading and Reporting system?

A: SMOS is committed to creating a “learning goal-orientated student” who is motivated by a desire to improve knowledge and to develop a deeper understanding of the learning goals. Our grading and reporting system needs to reflect grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of student learning. The use of standards based grading is an effort to reach this goal. Here is how standards based grading addresses each of the four criteria.

Accurate- By basing a student's grade solely on academic factors, the teacher creates a clear picture of what the student has learned without the influence of other factors. These other factors, such as effort and attitude, are still essential, but are not part of the student's academic grade and are communicated separately.

Consistent- For each unit, the teacher will provide the student with a rubric that describes exactly which skills the student is expected to master. The use of rubrics establishes clear expectations for mastery up front and applies them consistently as students refer to their rubric throughout the unit and semester.

Meaningful- A meaningful grade is one that clearly communicates what learning has taken place. In a curriculum based classroom, scores are recorded by the essential standards rather than by type, such as tests or homework, making it easier to identify areas of strength and to address areas of concern for each student.

Supportive of Learning- Standards based grading supports learning by focusing on the material that has or has not been learned rather than on accumulating points to reach a certain total. The ability to reassess a student supports student learning by allowing a new level of learning to replace the old when a student shows improvement on an assessment.

Q: What are rubrics and why do teachers use them?

A: A rubric is:

- A tool to assign distinct levels of knowledge and skill relative to a specific topic
- A tool that makes it easy for teachers to design and score assessments that can be used to generate both formative (informal) and summative (formal) scores
- A tool that helps the students know how their work will be evaluated before the work begins

There are many advantages to using rubrics:

- Teachers can increase the quality of their direct instruction by providing focus, emphasis, and attention to particular details as a model for students
- Students have explicit guidelines regarding teacher expectations
- Students can use rubrics as a tool to develop their abilities

Please see pages 11 and 12 for an example of a completed rubric.

Q: How will my child be assessed?

A: Each student's learning will be assessed using a variety of formative and summative assessments. These tools will include summative (formal) assessments such as traditional paper-and-pencil tests, projects, written papers, lab reports, or verbal assessments, but they may also include formative (informal) assessments such as classroom discussions or teacher observations. Essentially, everything that a student does in a standards based class provides the teacher with evidence of the student's learning.

Q: What can my child do to raise their grade in a standards based class?

A: The goal in a standards based class is to ensure students master the essential standards for the class, so any efforts to raise your child's grade will have the same goal. Your child should meet with the teacher during their regularly scheduled Conference Time to determine which standards need improvement. Together, they will create a plan on how to relearn the material . If your child demonstrates a higher level of mastery throughout the unit, then the grade for that standard will be increased and the student's grade will increase. Again, the focus is on improving your child's mastery of the material, so extra credit points are not used in curriculum based classrooms.

Q: What is Conference Time?

A: Conferences take place between the teacher and student. This time allows the teacher the opportunity to work with each student to specifically target their strengths and weaknesses. It also gives the student the ability to ask questions and to develop a plan for success. The teacher will offer suggestions and even direct the student to additional resources for more information and practice. Conference Time will look a bit different in K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. This time can be a scheduled part of their day, during homeroom, or during class meetings. The Teacher will determine the best time to conference with individual students.

Q: What can I do to help motivate my child using the standards based reporting and grading system?

A: Our goal at St. Margaret of Scotland is to develop a **learning goal-orientated student** who is motivated by a desire to improve knowledge and to develop a deeper understanding; getting a reward or avoiding punishment is secondary. As a result, learning and motivation are more intrinsic. Students with this attitude see the value in what is being learned, prefer more challenging tasks, display independent learning, become more success-oriented rather than failure-avoiding, and understand the connection between their effort and successful performance.

Standards based grading leads to a learning goal-orientation because what students learn is focused on the descriptors in the rubrics which indicate the level of success. Students who MASTER the standards should be celebrated for the fact they have developed a deeper understanding of the learning goal. With time, students will be able to see the direct link between the Performance Descriptors and their performance.

The level at which a student feels they are capable of success strengthens with Standards Based grading because separate grades are given for non-academic skills, such as effort and participation. This method helps students understand the connection between effort and

performance and that trying to learn results in better performance. As students realize their understanding increased because of their efforts, students are more likely to be motivated and engaged.

As a parent, you can help your child stay motivated by supporting SMOS's goal of creating a learning goal-orientated student, encouraging your child to always do their best, keeping in contact with your child's teacher, recognizing the hard work your child puts into learning the individual standards, and viewing the gradebook and report card with an eye toward learning more about how and what your child learns.

Q: What about admittance to high school?

A: Many of the area high schools are already converting to the Standards Based approach to grading and reporting. High Schools take many areas into consideration before accepting a student; report card grades and the comment from the teacher, the student's SMOS charisms, and the student's standardized test scores. These schools assure St. Margaret of Scotland, and other elementary schools using standards based grading, they are not only open to receiving our standards based report cards, but look forward to them since they give such a detailed glimpse into the student's knowledge, abilities, and work habits.

COMPONENTS OF THE STANDARDS BASED GRADING REPORT CARD

The St. Margaret of Scotland Report Card addresses all core and specialty subjects. In an effort to provide more detailed information, these subjects have been subdivided into “domains”. The standards (or concepts/skills) are listed under the domain.

Example of the SMOS Kindergarten Report Card:

(subject) *Language Arts*

(Domain) Literature - Key Ideas and Details

(standards) -With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
-With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.
-With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

(Domain) Text Types and Purposes

(standards)

-Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., My favorite book is . . .).

-Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

-Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

PROFICIENCY SCALE	PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTOR	EXPLANATION
4	EXPANDS BEYOND MASTERY	The student EXPANDS beyond mastery. The student has already moved to the next level of learning on this skill. The student demonstrates an understanding of the learning goal and applies the information, concepts, and skills at an independent level .
3	MASTERY	The student demonstrates MASTERY of the standard or skill. The student consistently demonstrates an understanding of the learning goal and applies the information, concepts, and skills at an independent level .
2	PROGRESSING	The student is PROGRESSING with their understanding of the standard or skill. The student can SOMETIMES demonstrates an understanding of the learning goal by applying the necessary information, concepts, and skills. The student needs teacher support in order to meet the learning goal.
1	IMPROVEMENT IS STILL NEEDED	The student is working hard, but IMPROVEMENT IS STILL NEEDED to demonstrate an understanding of the standard or skill. The student INFREQUENTLY demonstrates understanding of the learning goal by applying the necessary information, concepts, and skills. The student needs reteaching and extra support in order to meet the learning goal.
0/T	LACK of EVIDENCE	Assessment of student learning is not possible due to lack of evidence, e.g. missing work

Note: St. Margaret of Scotland teachers expect that most, in some cases all, students will attain mastery (3) by the time the lesson is completed and students are ready to move on to the next learning standard. Expanding beyond mastery (4) is the work of a few and for those few not always and not in every subject area.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFICIENCY SCALE

PROFICIENCY SCALE	PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTOR	EXPLANATION
4	EXPANDS BEYOND MASTERY	The student EXPANDS beyond mastery. The student has already moved to the next level of learning on this skill. The student demonstrates an understanding of the learning goal and applies the information, concepts, and skills at an independent level .
3	MASTERY	The student demonstrates MASTERY of the standard or skill. The student consistently demonstrates an understanding of the learning goal and applies the information, concepts, and skills at an independent level .
2+	PROGRESSING	The student is PROGRESSING with their understanding of the standard or skill. The student can USUALLY demonstrate an understanding of the learning goal by applying the necessary information, concepts, and skills. The student needs teacher support in order to meet the learning goal.
2	DEVELOPING	The student is DEVELOPING with their understanding of the standard or skill. The student can SOMETIMES demonstrate an understanding of the learning goal by applying the necessary information, concepts, and skills. The student needs teacher support in order to meet the learning goal.
1	IMPROVEMENT IS STILL NEEDED	The student is attempting the work, but IMPROVEMENT IS STILL NEEDED to demonstrate an understanding of the standard or skill. The student INFREQUENTLY demonstrates understanding of the learning goal by applying the necessary information, concepts, and skills. The student needs reteaching and extra support in order to meet the learning goal.
0	LACK of EVIDENCE	Assessment of student learning is not possible due to lack of evidence, e.g. missing work

Note: St. Margaret of Scotland teachers expect that most, in some cases all, students will attain mastery (3) by the time the lesson is completed and students are ready to move on to the next learning standard. Expanding beyond mastery (4) is the work of a few and for those few not always and not in every subject area.

SMOS CHARISM

Speak and act with care

Make sure you wear our uniform with pride

On time all the time

Stop, look, listen

The SMOS charism determines each students' evaluation of Personal Work Habits and Social Interaction that appear on each report card.

WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

Developing and maintaining standards based grading and reporting is a continually evolving process. We have the following system in place to continually monitor and update SBG.

- SMOS faculty members will engage in structured, on-going, and targeted professional learning.
- Evaluate and update standards based report cards and gradebooks annually.
- Frequently evaluate and update our process for receiving feedback from all stakeholders.
- Work closely with the admission directors of area Catholic high schools.

WHERE YOU CAN LOOK FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Five Obstacles to Grading Reform by: Thomas R. Guskey

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov11/vol69/num03/Five-Obstacles-to-Grading-Reform.aspx>

Grades That Show What Students Know by: Robert Marzano and Tammy Heflebower

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/235d/9929f60556cbf0f1207392380975010c6003.pdf?_ga=2.58811437.1409414918.1565369780-1026455678.1565369780

Letter Grades Deserve an 'F' by: Jessica Lahey

<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/03/letter-grades-deserve-an-f/284372>

Sample Kindergarten Rubric

<p>Proficiency Standard:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Identifies characters, setting, and plot of stories.</p>			
<p>SMOS Curriculum Statements:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major story events.</p>			
Scoring	General Scoring Guidelines	Specific Unit Rubric	Lessons/Activities
4	Extends beyond SMOS expectations with analysis, synthesis, evaluation	Student meets all aspects of the standard. They go beyond basic question and answer and share additional information, and/or connections to the book.	
3	Meets SMOS expectations with application, modeling, demonstrating comprehension	Student is able to meet all aspects of the standard.	
2	No major errors regarding simpler details: knowledge at level of identification and recall	Student fulfills some aspects of the standard but not all. Answers may be partially correct but are missing important details.	
1	With help, partial understanding of some of the simpler details accomplished	Student is not yet able to identify characters, setting, or major events in a story.	
0	Lack of evidence	Assessment of student learning is not possible due to lack of evidence, e.g. missing work	

Gr. 6 Religion

Proficiency Standard: Recognize Sacred Scripture as the sacred revelation of salvation history, literary genres, and guideposts for life.

SMOS Curriculum:

Students will describe divine revelation and divine inspiration and distinguish between them.

Students will relate the meaning of passages to their lives, with an emphasis on the Book of Isaiah and its relationship to the New Testament.

Students will relate their lives to the lives of others called by God to serve the Church.

Scoring	SMOS Scoring Guidelines	Specific Unit Rubric	Lessons/Activities
4	Extends beyond SMOS expectations with analysis, synthesis, evaluation	Contributes deep thought to class discussions that expands beyond the grade level expectations;; synthesizes Scripture when designing ad; actively participates at Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Early Church • Acts of the Apostles • Pentecost • Church leadership • Advertising: what is attractive • T-shirt design • Bible citation • Catechism: divine revelation and divine inspiration
3	Meets SMOS expectations with application, modeling, demonstrating comprehension	Participates in class discussions; meets grade level expectations of making connections among topics; uses the Bible correctly; designs add relates to Scripture; actively participates at Mass	
2+	The student is PROGRESSING with their understanding of the standard or skill. The student can USUALLY demonstrate an understanding of the learning goal by applying the necessary information, concepts, and skills. The student needs teacher		

	support in order to meet the learning goal.		
2	No major errors regarding simpler details: knowledge at level of identification and recall	Answers when called on; recall of meaning of scripture passages; uses Bible correctly only with help; B on quiz; usually participates at Mass	
1	With help, partial understanding of some of the simpler details accomplished	Does not participate in class discussions; needs help locating Bible passages; C or lower on quiz; participates at Mass when reminded	
0	Lack of evidence	Assessment of student learning is not possible due to lack of evidence, e.g. missing work	