



Novato Unified School District

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# **Parent Guide**

**Elementary Standards-Based  
Report Card  
2006**

**NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Instructional Services Division**

**K-5 Elementary Report Card**  
**Putting Standards Into Action**  
**Parent Information**

The purpose of this Parent Guide is to provide parents with information about the K-5 Elementary Standards Based Report Card.

**Background:**

In March 2004, a committee was formed to develop an elementary report card that aligned with state standards and classroom instruction. On September 20, 2005 the elementary report card was presented to the Board for approval as a pilot for the 2005-2006 school year.

The elementary report card was piloted by teachers at each grade level at each elementary school. A total of 134 teachers piloted the report card. Each school principal and teacher leaders introduced the new report card to Site Leadership Teams, PTA's, and to all parents attending Back to School Nights. During fall conferences, teachers discussed the grade level standards with parents, reviewed the pilot report card, and explained the academic markings used to communicate student progress. Teachers were trained in the use of the new software program, *The Report Card Maker*.

Following the second trimester, parent surveys were distributed to parents participating in the pilot at each elementary school. Teachers also completed a survey. A core committee, with teacher representatives from each school, met throughout the pilot to provide ongoing communication, support, and recommendations for improving the card.

On June 6, 2006, the Elementary Standards-based Report Card was presented to the Board of Trustees with revisions, and received approval for implementation beginning in August 2006.

**What is standards-based grading and reporting?**

Standards-based education is not new to the District or the State. Standards have been an important part of the curriculum in NUSD for a number of years. The State of California requires all students to receive instruction in and master the standards for each grade level.

A standards-based report card informs parents about what their children know, what they are able to do, and what they need to learn in relation to the standards. State standards are supported by classroom instruction using standards-based texts and standards-based

lessons. All students in grades 2-11 are assessed every year on the state standards with the California STAR testing program. The new report card is another tool for reporting student progress that is aligned with our standards-based system.

### **How will I know if my child is meeting grade level standards?**

Ideally a report card is an ongoing conversation between teachers, students, and parents about what is expected of students and how to help them be successful in a rigorous academic program. A mark on the report card is a summary statement of student performance in a subject area. Academic markings reflect what students have achieved academically. Effort markings reflect student behavior and effort. Report cards should communicate how well students are progressing towards being proficient on grade-level standards. This means that a student on track to meet all of the standards might well have a report card that states – *approaching grade-level standard* – as the student progresses towards mastery by the end of the year.

In a standards-based system, students demonstrate their learning and their progress at various points of the year, as defined by student work samples. This expected target is called a **benchmark**. Throughout the assessment process, teachers gather data or give feedback about a student's performance in order to determine a student's strengths and weaknesses, improve instruction, and document student progress.

### **The New Look**

The standards-based report card is designed to fully communicate what students are expected to know and be able to do as set forth in the California State Frameworks and Content Standards.

The new report cards have a new look with two significant changes. First, they include many more specific items relating to the knowledge and skills your child should attain by the end of the year. Secondly, they use academic markings to reflect your child's progress towards meeting each standard and effort markings to reflect performance.

Academic Markings are based on progress toward grade level standards at the given grading periods as listed on the next page.

**ELEMENTARY REPORT CARD**

**Academic Markings  
Progress Toward Grade Level Standards  
Based on Current Performance**

- 4 Meeting standards with excellence**
- Demonstrates a deeper understanding of grade level standards
  - Independently extends grade level standards
- 3 Meeting standards**
- Consistent application of skills
  - Independently applies grade level skills
- 2 Approaching standards**
- Progressing in understanding, however, the skills are not yet mastered
  - Needs assistance to use grade level skills
- 1 Below standards**
- Working below grade level expectations
  - Needs continued support, struggles even with assistance
  - Needs intervention

**EFFORT MARKINGS:**

**O**

= Outstanding

**S**

= Satisfactory

**N**

= Needs Improvement

### **How will students receiving special education services be graded?**

Special education students are also given the regular district report card. To comply with law, documentation of progress specific to IEP goals and objectives will be reported to parents on IEP forms each trimester.

### **How will students in the English Learner Program be graded?**

In addition to the regular report card, teachers may use the English Language Development progress profile to show growth in learning the English language. Students, who have been identified as proficient in English through the CELDT testing process, are subject to the same requirements as English only students.

### **How can I learn more about the report card?**

Each November, teachers will review the new standards-based report card with parents during individual parent-teacher conferences. Presentations will take place at Back-to-School Night, and various other site specific planning sessions. Parents should contact their child's teacher with specific questions about their child's progress.

### **How frequently will report cards be distributed?**

The timeline for receiving report cards follows the trimester time line as in previous years. The standards-based report card will be distributed three times this year:

- November with a conference
- March
- June

Report cards are one part (a very important part) of an integrated system that emphasizes continuous assessment of student progress and achievement. Our goal is to communicate how well your child is progressing towards grade level standards, and we are confident that the new report card will provide you with more extensive and explicit information about your child's learning.