



# Communication of Student Learning Parent Guide to Report Cards September 2019-2020



# Communication of Student Learning: Parent Guide

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## Introduction

We know that it is important for parents to understand how their children are doing in school. The new elementary report card in **Canadian Rockies Public Schools (CRPS)** has been redesigned to give you a useful report of your child's progress and learning. It is important to remember that a report card is only **one** of many ways in which teachers and parents communicate about a child's learning. The report card is a snapshot in time of the much larger story of your child's learning.

The purpose of the report card and all other assessment is to improve student learning. The report card confirms for parents their child's level of achievement relative to provincial expectations for the grade. Students are evaluated on an individual basis without comparison to others. The report card describes for parents their child's achievement and other aspects of their learning in a way that will help parents support their child's learning.

We know that communication of student learning is an ongoing process that involves students, parents and teachers in making sense of a student's learning. Other ways may include:

- collections of student work such as portfolios
- phone calls
- emails
- notes in agendas
- meetings
- celebrations of student learning
- newsletters
- blogs
- evaluated assignments or projects
- personal notes
- Online feedback

The redesigned Report Card for CRPS is based on best practice in both assessment and reporting. As a small school division we looked to our colleagues across the province to learn from them in how they support student learning through communicating with parents and students about student achievement. The redesigned report card is based on the work of other divisions, notably Elk Island Public Schools and Rockyview School Division. We are also appreciative of the work of CRPS teachers and administrators who worked with us to redesign a report card that supports student learning in our community.

## What is different about the new report card?

The CRPS Divisional Elementary Report Card (grades K -6) and Grade 7 - 8 report cards are designed to give you a clear, realistic report about your child's learning. The [Alberta Programs](#)

[of Study](#) are changing, and like many school divisions in the province CRPS is redesigning assessment practices to reflect these changes. The process of redesign will continue to evolve over a number of years as we work with our schools and parents to develop a common report card.

In CRPS schools like all others in the province, student learning is assessed and understood based on an outcome. The redesigned report card is tied directly to the Alberta curriculum. The [Alberta Education Programs of Study](#) is outcomes-based - it describes what your child is expected to know and be able to do each year in each subject. The report card uses **standards** to describe how well a student has achieved a **learning outcome**.

Continuing this year, students will receive two written reports (January and June) and parents will be invited to attend face to face conferences with your child and teachers to review learning goals and progress. (October and March)

The redesign of the report card reflects current research and best practice, it reflects the [Ministerial Order on Student Learning](#) and is guided by the tenets of [Inspiring Hearts and Minds](#). The report card will report on your child's progress in learner attributes and achievement standards.

**Learner Attributes** are those characteristics of students that are considered to be important factors in student success as learners. Based on best practice our report card continues to use three levels of indicators to provide feedback in relation to student skills (**Excellent**, **Meets Expectations** and **Requires Growth**). The grade 7 and 8 report card will list learner attributes as a strength or an area in need of further development.

An **Achievement Standard** differs from a mark. It includes all the evidence of your child's learning (i.e. anecdotal records, observations, assignments, tests) and provides a summary statement of their achievement at the time of the report card.

Why use **achievement standards** and not percentages ...

Percentages and class averages can be **discouraging** for many students, because...

- the *average* is a moving target that may go up or down
- no matter how hard they work, and no matter how much they learn, up to half of all students are always below average
- judgements about a student's achievement are based on the achievement of others

**Achievement standards** can be **encouraging** for many students because...

- **standards** are targets that hold still
- **standards** are targets that can be clearly described and worked toward by all students
- the more a student learns, the closer he or she gets to the learning target



## Understanding the standards used in the report card.

The following is a description of the rating systems used in our report card. Students are evaluated on an individual basis without comparison to others

### Learner Attributes

Through a three point rating scale and teacher comments on areas of strength and areas of growth, the report will indicate your child's progress in relation to the following learner attributes: **organization, responsibility; cooperation; participation; work quality and respect for self and others**. The descriptors indicate how much effort a student invests in his or her learning. These describe your child's level of involvement in class assignments, discussions and activities.

### Learner Attribute Standards (Grades K-6)

(The grade 7 and 8 report card will list learner attributes as a strength or area in need of further development)

Learner Attributes are those characteristics of students that are considered to be important factors in their success as learners. The following levels describe the degree to which students demonstrate each attribute:	
<b>Excellent (E)</b>	Effort that is <b>commendable</b> . The student shows meaningful engagement in learning activities, is <b>highly focused</b> on tasks and shows a high level of responsibility and respect, that is, nearly all the time.
<b>Meets Expectations (M)</b>	Effort that is <b>appropriate</b> . The student voluntarily engages in learning activities, is <b>usually focused</b> on tasks and shows an acceptable level of responsibility and respect, that is, much of the time.
<b>Requires Growth (G)</b>	Effort that is <b>not yet</b> acceptable. The student reluctantly engages in learning activities, is <b>inconsistently focused</b> on tasks even with prompting and direction and shows an insufficient level of responsibility and respect.

### Achievement Standards (Grades K-8)

An achievement standard differs from a mark. It includes all the evidence of your child's learning and provides a summary statement of their achievement at the time of the report card.

<b>Exemplary</b>	Achievement that is <b>commendable</b> . The student demonstrates an <b>in-depth</b> and <b>broad</b> understanding of subject outcomes at this grade
<b>Proficient</b>	Achievement that is <b>competent</b> . The student demonstrates a <b>well-developed</b> and <b>consistent</b> understanding of subject outcomes at this grade
<b>Progressing</b>	Achievement that is <b>adequate</b> . The student demonstrates a <b>basic</b> and/or <b>inconsistent</b> understanding of subject outcomes at this grade

<b>Not Yet</b>	Achievement that is <b>not yet</b> at an acceptable level. The student demonstrates an <b>inadequate</b> understanding of subject outcomes at this grade
<b>Unable to evaluate at this time</b>	Due to absences or sickness the student has not been present to determine the extent to which they have progressed in meeting the learning outcomes presented to date

## How will teachers determine my child’s grades?

Throughout the term, teachers will gather examples of your child demonstrating understanding of the learning outcomes outlined in the curriculum. These examples, or “evidence of learning” may include assignments, tests, presentations, projects and performances. Teachers will also record observations of your child in class and talk with them about their learning to gather as much information as possible before assigning a grade.

In addition to determining a grade, this ongoing assessment and feedback helps students adjust their learning strategies as they learn and improve their understanding. This feedback loop also helps students to build awareness of themselves as learners, and become increasingly self-directed.

## What is a good way to talk about the report card with my child?

Talking with your child about the report card can be a positive, productive experience. The following points may help:

- Make time to talk in a quiet place with your child about his or her report card. “Let’s look at your report card.” (*inviting*)
- Start with the good, talking about your child’s successes first. You could ask, “What would you like to talk about first?” (*This comment positions the student as the one in charge of the agenda, at least at first. This conference is about his/her learning.*)
- For disappointing grades, ask questions so you and your child understand how the grade was earned.
  - a. why do you think you have the grade you do?
  - b. was the work completed and turned in?
  - c. will extra help be needed? Is your child comfortable asking for extra help?
  - d. would more participation and effort make a difference?
- Ask your child how you can work together to improve?
- Remember that all children learn in different ways and at different rates, it is important to support your child in his or her learning journey. A possible closing question, “What are you most proud of?” (*This comment implies that the student can judge her own work. It gives permission for the student to feel proud, (based on his/her judgment, not because an adult said so).*)

[Alberta Education - Guide to Education](#) provides consistent direction to Alberta schools regarding ECS to grade 12 programs, education delivery and achievement standards for students in Alberta schools. It describes how schools must communicate to parents regarding student achievement to ensure that the information to parents is clear and consistent with regard to grade level of instruction and program type. In CRPS the following programs are designed based on student need

<b>Regular Program</b>	When a student is placed in age-appropriate groups for instruction and are working at the prescribed level curriculum
<b>Adapted Program</b>	Programming that retains the learning outcomes of the Program of Studies and where adjustments to the instructional process are provided to address the special education needs of the student
<b>Modified Program</b>	Programming in which the learning outcomes are significantly different from the provincial curriculum and are specifically selected to meet students' special education needs

Individualized Program Plan (IPP) means a concise plan of action designed to address students' special education needs, and is based on diagnostic information which provides the basis for intervention strategies.



# How do I read my child's report card?

These are the learning outcomes that Alberta students are expected to achieve

The four levels of Achievement used by teachers are represented by the letters **Exem**=exemplary, **Prof**=proficient, **Pg** = progressing and **Not Yet**=not yet. \*In some circumstances **UA** may also be used to indicate the teacher is unable to assess. An achievement level of **Prog** or above **meets** grade level expectations

## English Language Arts



	S1	S2
<b>Understands What is Read</b>		
• Demonstrates comprehension of grade level material	Exem	
• Identifies main ideas or topics	Exem	
• Relates aspects of stories and characters to personal feelings and experiences	Exem	
<b>Reads with fluency and accuracy</b>	<b>S1</b>	<b>S2</b>
• Identifies the sounds produced by upper and lower case letters in familiar words	Exem	
• Uses a variety of strategies to decode unfamiliar words	Exem	
• Reads smoothly, attending to punctuation	Prof	
<b>Creates writing which conveys meaning</b>	<b>S1</b>	<b>S2</b>
• Writes, represents and/or tells brief stories about own ideas and experiences	Prof	
<b>Uses strategies to revise and edit writing</b>	<b>S1</b>	<b>S2</b>
• Uses letter sound knowledge to spell familiar and unfamiliar words	Not Yet	
• Uses familiar and high frequency words accurately in own writing	Exem	
• Prints legibly, forming letters of consistent size, shape and spacing	Exem	
<b>Communicates thoughts and ideas in a variety of ways</b>	<b>S1</b>	<b>S2</b>
• Demonstrates attentive listening, speaking, and viewing skills	Exem	
• Shares information orally and visually (Social Studies and Science)	Exem	

Teachers may use **comments** to provide information about a student's achievement, progress or effort, and give suggestions about what to do next.

## How Learner Attributes help your child and what to look for:

### Learner Attribute Indicators (K- 6)

(The grade 7 and 8 report card will list learner attributes as a strength or area for growth for further development)

<p>I am highly independent</p>  <p><b>EX</b></p> <p>Excellent</p>	<p>I am usually doing this</p>  <p><b>M</b></p> <p>Meets Expectations</p>	<p>I am working on this</p>  <p><b>G</b></p> <p>Requires Growth</p>
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<b>Shows Organization</b>			
<b>Demonstrates Responsibility</b>			
<b>Cooperates with Others</b>			
<b>Participates</b>			
<b>Strives for Quality Work</b>			
<b>Respects Self and Others</b>			

**Shows Organization**

Completes tasks within the time provided  
Organizes tasks and materials  
Prepared for class  
Devises and follows a plan and process for completing work and tasks  
Establishes priorities and manages time to complete tasks and achieve goals  
Identifies, gathers, evaluates and uses information, technology, and resources to complete tasks

**Demonstrates Responsibility**

Follows expectations  
Demonstrates good choices  
Takes responsibility for behaviour choices  
Takes responsibility for tasks and materials  
Is reliable, dependable and trustworthy  
Fulfills responsibilities and commitments within the learning environment  
Completes and submits classwork, homework, and assignments according to agreed upon timelines  
Takes responsibility for and manages own behaviour

**Cooperates with others**

Volunteers to help others  
Willingly includes others  
Listens and observes attentively  
Demonstrates ability to work together with compassion and integrity  
Responds positively to the ideas, opinion, values and traditions of others  
Works with others to resolve conflicts and build consensus to achieve group goals  
Builds healthy, peer-to-peer relationships through personal and media-assisted interactions

**Participation**

Contributes to and is engaged in class discussions and collaborative work

Participates and engages in group activities  
Accepts various roles and an equitable share of work in a group  
Looks for and applies new ideas and opportunities for learning  
Demonstrates the capacity for innovation and a willingness to take risks  
Demonstrates curiosity and interest in learning

**Strives for quality work**

Sets personal goals  
Demonstrates consistent effort  
Seeks help as needed  
Initiates and engages in tasks  
Demonstrates perseverance to complete tasks  
Follows through with individual and group plans

**Respects self and others**

Treats self and others with dignity  
Cares for property and environment  
Seeks to understand ideas and opinions of others  
Considers the feelings of others

**How do I contact my child's teacher if I have questions?**

The research tells us that one of the greatest predictors of student success is the frequency and depth of communication between home and school. If at any time you have questions about your child's progress, achievement or social well being, your first contact is your child's classroom teacher.

## Frequently Asked Questions

All Canadian Rockies Public Schools will be using an outcomes based report card beginning in the fall of 2016.

### How often will families be informed about students progress?

There will be four common reporting periods in CRPS. The four reporting periods will be made up of: **two face to face meetings** with parents/guardians, students and teachers (October and March) and **two written progress reports** (January and June). Each reporting period will provide information in relation to **learning outcomes** and **learner attributes**.

### What is the purpose of outcomes based reporting?

The purpose of outcomes based reporting is to clearly communicate student performance.

### Why are we changing the report card now?

The change to outcomes based reporting in grades 1 - 8 comes from the belief that our previous report cards and reporting systems did not fully communicate what students were expected to know and be able to do. This new report card will benefit students, parents and teachers. It will allow students to be more aware of what is expected of them. It will provide families with a more detailed outline of the expectations in each major academic area.

### How does this redesigned report card differ from what we have used in the past?

In our previous report card (and not all of the report cards were the same across the Division), typically students received one grade for each class (one grade for reading, one for science, one for mathematics, etc.). On the redesigned **outcomes based report card** each of these subject areas is further expanded to include additional detail for reporting students skill and knowledge. Students receive a separate mark for each indicator. In addition, students receive scores for learner attributes separate from their academic marks.

### What are Learner Attributes?

Through a three point rating scale and teacher comments on areas of strength and areas of growth. The report will indicate your child's progress in relation to the following learner attributes: **organization, responsibility, cooperation, participation, work quality and respect for self and others**. The descriptors indicate how much effort a student invests in his or her learning. These describe your child's level of involvement in class assignments, discussions and activities.

### What is the difference between the traditional "A" through "F" grading system and an outcomes based one?

#### **Traditional Grading**

- A, B, C, D, E, F represent the percentage of points accumulated
- non-academic factors affect grades such as participation, attendance, late work, etc.
- everything is graded and averaged together

- reports a single grade for each class

### **Outcomes based reporting**

- Indicators represent student performance in relation to specific learner outcomes
- based on [Alberta Education Program of Study](#)
- a report of what students know and are able to do
- reflect academic performance only
- behavioural information (Learner Attributes) are reported separately

### **What about the transition from outcomes based reporting to traditional grading in the high school? If a student receives mostly “Proficient” what kind of grades can they expect in high school?**

The grades that students receive in high school will depend upon the degree to which they meet their teachers’ communicated expectations. Students who meet grade level content standards in elementary school and practice developing scholarly skills reflected by the Learner Attributes, are instilling positive habits to keep them on the right track. As a result, students will perform according to the curricular standards and receive good grades in high school. Students who pay attention, study and produce quality work typically find educational, career and personal success no matter what the grading system.

### **Resources and Further Reading**

Guskey, T. and Bailey, J. (2001) *Developing Grading and Reporting Systems for Student Learning*. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Guskey, T. (2002) *How’s My Kid Doing? A Parent’s Guide to Grades, Marks and Report Cards*. Jossey-Bass Publishing, San Francisco, CA.

Marzano, R. (2000) *Transforming Classroom Grading*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum. Alexandria, Virginia.

O’Connor, Ken (2007) *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*. Educational Testing Services. Portland, OR.

O’Connor, Ken (2002) *How to Grade for Learning: Linking Grades to Standards*. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Stiggins, R. and Arter J. and Chappuis, J. and Chappuis S. (2004) *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing it Right - Using it Well*. Assessment Training Institute. Portland, OR.

Wormelli, Rick (2006) *Fair Isn’t Always Equal: Assessing and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*. Stenhouse Publishers, Portland, Maine,

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Glossary of terms used in and about report cards

<p><b>Assessment:</b> Process of collecting information on student achievement and performance that includes a variety of assessment tasks designed to monitor and improve student learning. Throughout this document the term “assessment” encompasses <b>Assessment for Learning</b> and <b>Assessment of Learning</b></p>	<p><b>Assessment of Learning</b> (Summative Assessment) Assessment experiences designed to collect information about learning and make judgements about student performance and achievement at the end of a period of instruction. <b>Assessment of learning</b> is used to confirm what students know and can do. Teachers ensure that they have used summative assessment evidence to provide valid and reliable statements of student’s proficiency so that recipients of the information can use it to make reasonable and defensible decisions.</p>	<p><b>Modified programming:</b> programming in which the learner outcomes are significantly different from the programs of study and are specifically selected to meet the student’s special education needs.</p>
<p><b>Assessment for Learning:</b> (Formative Assessment) Assessment experiences that result in an ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learner outcomes - used to inform both teacher and student on next steps and is not used for grading purposes..</p>	<p><b>Descriptive Feedback:</b> part of an ongoing, timely, constructive, and specific conversation about learning that relates directly to the learner outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Adapted programming:</b> programming that retains the learner outcomes of the programs of study and where adjustments to the instructional process are provided to address the special education needs of the student.</p>
<p><b>Assessment for Learning</b> requires careful design on the part of teachers so that they use the resulting information to determine not only what students know, but also to gain insights into how, when, and whether students apply what they know. It provides teachers with information to modify and differentiate teaching and learning activities. Teachers use this information to streamline and target instruction and resources, to provide feedback to students to help them to advance their learning.</p>	<p><b>Grade Level of Achievement (GLA):</b> a teacher judgement based on the results from a variety of classroom assessments throughout the school year in relation to learner outcomes in a subject area after a course for a specific grade level has been completed. Alberta Education requires that Teachers shall ensure that information is communicated effectively to parents about what their child knows and can do in the courses being studied, how well their child is doing in those courses, the grade level(s) the child has achieved in relation to the grade levels of the provincial programs of study for language arts and mathematics. (This is expressed as above, at or below grade level expectations)</p>	<p><b>Alberta Programs of Study</b> (curriculum) identifies what students are expected to learn and do in all subjects and grades. The curriculum is designed to help students achieve their individual potential and create a positive future for themselves, their families and their communities. This is different from a textbook which is just a resource.</p>



<b>Grade:</b> (mark or achievement standard) a summary statement of student achievement relative to curriculum standards.		
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*The purpose of a report card is to describe students' learning progress to students, their parents and others, based on our school division's learning expectations for each grade level. It is intended to inform parents about learning successes and to guide improvements when needed.*

(Guskey & Bailey, 2010, p. 35)