

Understanding Elementary Grading: Lake Washington School District

The Lake Washington School District has made a commitment to families to communicate clear, consistent, and current information regarding how students are progressing against the State and local standards, and specific strands of these standards are reported via the elementary report card. We communicate formally to families with report cards in January and June and via goal setting conferences in October and January. We also provide anytime, anywhere access to student progress via our standards-referenced view of the grade book called, 'Family Access'.

Teachers use multiple measures of student proficiency as part of a balanced approach to assessing and reporting. Teachers collect information through a variety of formative and summative assessments that may include a range of events such as, observations, journal entries, performance assessments (students physically doing tasks), interviews, checklists, conferences and many more. These 'events' are entered into an electronic grade book called Skyward so that the system can generate a trend over time. The trend shows how the student is performing against the LWSD Power Standards across an entire year and teachers watch this trend in order to help adjust instruction for each student. This trend is available to help teachers tailor instruction for each student, and also helps parents and students monitor learning.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THE WORD 'EVENT?'

The term "event" is used to describe any opportunity to assess students' proficiency against the LWSD Power Standards. An event can be anything that provides useful data that helps grow student achievement. Events can be observations, formal assessments, assignments, worksheets, and so forth. All events that mark students' progress against the standards will be recorded in Skyward.

WHAT YOU'LL SEE IN THE FAMILY ACCESS VIEW:

Parents can see individual events via Family Access. First, you'll see a calendar view of events that have been scored by the teacher in the classroom. Parents may click on each event to see more details about that particular event, or they can click on the grade book button to see all scored events in a typical 'grade book' format.

HOW ARE STUDENTS GRADED?

Student work is scored using a scale from 1 through 4 including half-points. These scores show student progress against the standards with '3' indicating that the student has 'met standard.'

Score Description

4

Exceeds Standard

More complex content and thinking

3.5 Score 2.0 and 3.0 performance + partial success at 4.0 content

3

At Standard

No major errors or omissions regarding standard/learning target

2.5 Score 2.0 content + partial success at 3.0 content

2

Approaching Standard

No major errors or omissions regarding foundational content (concepts and procedures)

1.5 Partial success at 2.0 content

1

Not at Standard

With help, student can perform score 2.0 performance

/ *Not Evaluated at this Time*
(blank) *See Special Services Addendum*

Teachers then post the scores into their Skyward grade books. Scores entered into the grade book automatically populate the report card. Parents can see these scores in Family Access. Again, this standards-referenced approach to scoring allows teachers to watch a learning trend over time, giving them an accurate picture of how learning is progressing. The Skyward program assists us in calculating a trend rather than an average which more accurately describes any student's level of proficiency against the standards.

HOW SHOULD PARENTS INTERPRET SCORES ON EVENTS IN FAMILY ACCESS?

Parents should also keep an eye on trends over time. When skills are introduced for the first time, it is reasonable to expect that students may score in the 1 to 2 range. After all, they are just learning a brand new skill. As students get more experience with any given skill their performance will improve. This improvement is reflected in the final grade that is reported on the report card. Event scores help teachers address students' academic needs by answering two critical questions:

1. What next steps do I take for students who do not understand a skill?

2. What next steps do I take for students who already understand the skill?

A WORD OF CAUTION:

Don't be tempted to average the scores that appear in Family Access. This won't give an accurate picture of the score trend over time. Remember, a final grade based on a trend is an indicator of a level of understanding, not an average of lots of assignments.

Don't be afraid of scores in the 1-2 range. This is just a 'snapshot' of where your child is at any given moment, and as learning occurs the trend will rise.

Remember, we are watching learning happen over time and Skyward's calculation takes into account each student's experience on any given strand. We want to be sure that scores grow over time.