



EXCEPTIONAL GRADING & REPORTING PRACTICES

ELEMENTARY LEVEL
2023/24

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OVERVIEW



WHY IS THERE A NEED TO SHIFT TO EXCEPTIONAL GRADING AND REPORTING PRACTICES AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL?

The recent pandemic has brought a new spotlight to how we assess and report academic progress. At the elementary level in Rialto Unified School District, a shift towards progress monitoring and reporting through a proficiency-based report card provides families, students, and educational support teams with information regarding demonstrated progress toward proficiency of essential grade-level standards.



The exceptional grading practices and reporting system allows teachers to more accurately and consistently report student achievement to students and families relative to priority state standards. An exceptional grading practices system focuses on student learning of grade level content and application of skills as opposed to the accumulation of points. This system will allow for an equitable grading practice that is accurate, bias-resistant and motivational for students.

OVERVIEW CONT.



In an exceptional grading practices classroom, student work is evaluated as evidence of learning. Teachers and students use established rubrics to determine what level of learning is evident based on the work the student produces. Variables other than evidence of learning, are not included in the final grade mark assigned to a student. The transition to the exceptional grading practices and reporting system will result in more consistent grade level expectations.

Grades are the ultimate form of feedback to students and families about their progress towards proficiency of the standards. Grades need to be accurate and meaningful so that families and students know exactly what has been learned and what opportunities there are for growth. Grades should be a clear and meaningful reflection of student learning. Grading and reporting aligned to specific essential standards, accompanied with student feedback and ongoing assessment, has been shown to significantly boost both motivation and achievement for students. When students know their instructional targets, they are much more likely to hit the target.





WHAT WILL A GRADE REPRESENT IN THE NEW REPORTING SYSTEM?

Grades are used to show a student's understanding of grade level standards that outline what a student should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level. Traditionally, we are all used to seeing grades as a letter (A, B, C, D, F). Exceptional grading practices go beyond a letter grade to provide a more accurate approach that signifies different levels of understanding or demonstration of skills based on their progress towards end-of-year proficiency.

The purpose of grading is to report to all members of the educational community, including students, achievement towards standards. The purpose of the new exceptional grading practices report card is to communicate student learning expectations, identify areas of strength, guide students towards improvement and ultimately grade level proficiency.

For a grade to be accurate, the evidence must be evaluated using academic standards-based performance levels. An activity, project, or assessment may be examined and counted as supporting documentation for a report card grade if it is in alignment with grade level requirements. There are factors that frequently affect a student's grade under our current letter-grading system that are unrelated to the student's mastery of standards. These elements are frequently connected to actions like participation, effort, and homework completion. Although these traits may speak to a student's scholarly practices, they do not always represent their understanding or application of grade-level standards.

REPORTING SYSTEM CONT.



In an exceptional grading practices classroom, a student's proficiency is recorded over time, with the most recent and proficient evidence having the most value. As a result, unlike presently, when total trimester results are determined by averaging all grades earned throughout a grading period, students are not penalized for not understanding grade level standards at the beginning of the year. Instead, the most recent or strongest evidence is reviewed and students are scored along a grading rubric showing their progress towards proficiency. This allows students to practice the skill, make mistakes, receive feedback, practice some more, and ultimately demonstrate proficiency by the end of the year.

GRADES



IE Insufficient Evidence of Mastery	EP Emerging Proficiency	AP Approaching Proficiency	P Proficient
No evidence of mastery of any part of the standard(s).	Beginning to show some mastery. Requires support to perform the standard(s).	Demonstrates partial understanding or can perform portions of the standard(s). Occasional support may be given.	Demonstrates full mastery of the standard(s). Can perform all portions of the standard(s) independently.



UNDERSTANDINGS AND SHIFTS TOWARDS AN EXCEPTIONAL GRADING PRACTICES REPORT CARD

- Grades are based on clearly defined end of year grade level standards.
- Throughout the learning cycle, students should receive feedback and be aware of grade level standards.
- Students should set goals, based on grade level standards, and their accomplishments should be celebrated.
- Instead of using a typical 100 point scale, the elementary grading rubrics will be used to analyze student work products, observations, and/or assessments to determine a grade. Teachers need only grade evidence towards proficiency.
- Evidence used to determine grades will be focused on what a student knows and is capable of doing in a subject area. It will not be based on actions like homework, late work, neatness, effort, or extra credit.
- Students should have multiple opportunities over a grading period to show proficiency of a standard. The most recent or closest to the standard score will take priority when calculating a grade. Teachers will not average scores to determine a grade.





CONTACT INFORMATION



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A photograph of a large, multi-tiered stone sign for Rialto Unified School District. The sign is made of rectangular stone blocks and features a decorative archway in the background. The text "RIALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT" is carved into the top tier, and "BRIDGING FUTURES THROUGH INNOVATION" is carved into the bottom tier. The sign is set against a backdrop of trees and a clear sky.

RIALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
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