

# ***Frequently Asked Questions***

## ***(for Parents and Students)***

### ***What are standards?***

A standards-based report card provides parents with specific information about their child's achievement relative to each standard. Academic standards are a set of learning expectations for each grade level and content area. These grade specific learning goals identify the content and skills students must achieve by the end of each school year. These standards increase in complexity as students move from one grade level to another. Please visit <https://ctcorestandards.org> to learn more about the CT core standards.

### ***Why don't we use letter grades?***

A letter grade only provides the student and parent information related to how well he/she performed on average in a broad area such as reading or math. A standards-based report card measures how well the individual student is doing in relationship to a set of grade level standard or learning goals. This gives parents a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses; with more detailed information related to the specific learning standard, students are encouraged to do their best and growth can be more accurately measured.

### ***How will the teacher assess my child's progress?***

In standards-based classrooms, the focus is on a student's performance over multiple occasions, not simply grading and averaging tests and quizzes. Teachers collect evidence of students' achievement through observation, analysis of student's work, discussions, performance tasks, class projects, quizzes and tests. Teachers keep careful records of each child's progress on a frequent basis. This information is analyzed and used to evaluate a student's progress towards the identified standards.

### ***How will I know if my child is achieving above the grade level standards?***

The expectations for learning at each grade level are clearly defined by the CT Core Standards. The CT Core standards are a "staircase" of expectations that increase in depth of understanding as a child grows and matures. A standards-based report card measures your child's understanding of the standard itself. Therefore, a child achieving "above standard or exceeding the standard" would need to be working on the expectations of that standard at the next grade level band. Your child's teacher will communicate this information in the comment area of the report card. There are many standards for which it is not possible to "exceed" knowing the

letters and sounds of the English language or knowing your multiplication facts 0-12 are two such examples.

### ***How is proficiency reported for special education?***

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) team determines, what, if any, accommodations and/or modifications are needed for the student to meet the identified standards. The IEP team aligns each annual goal to the appropriate standards and monitors progress throughout the school year. This will not change.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulate assessment practices for students with disabilities or in need of specially designed instruction. It is required that special education students are graded using the same grading system as all other students and their academic program must be aligned to the state's academic standards. You will, however, receive specific feedback on your child's IEP goals in addition to the grade level report card.

### ***How can parents support their children at home?***

Parents play an essential role in their child's academic success. You are encouraged to communicate regularly with your child's teacher. A wonderful benefit to the new standards based report card is that you are provided more detailed information related to your child's areas of need. This improved tool can provide the foundation for conversations at home between parents and their children. The report card serves as one communication device used by teachers to inform parents of their child's progress. It is important to seek additional information as needed to gain a complete picture of your child's performance.

### ***How will our children's progress be reported in the areas of art, music, and physical education class?***

Special area teachers complete a section of each child's report card. They have a list of standards on the grade level report card that will help you understand your child's progress in these areas. The special area teachers use the same grading system as the classroom teachers.