Kindergarten Assessment and Grading Practices

Now that we are in the 2nd quarter of kindergarten, students will begin to be assessed on standards related to each topic on the Kindergarten Report Card.

It is important to understand that our grading system is focused on end of the year mastery. There are 3 grades students can receive in content area standards: B (Below), P (Progressing), and M (Meets).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETS</th>
<th>the student can independently and consistently demonstrate mastery of all components of the standard through a variety of opportunities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROGRESSING</td>
<td>the student demonstrates inconsistent mastery towards the standard and may require teacher support to meet all components of the standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELOW</td>
<td>the student demonstrates minimal or no progress towards the standard and requires maximum teacher support</td>
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It is critical for students to display knowledge of these skills independently and consistently in order to deem mastery or a score of meets in that area.

As students complete assessments one-on-one with their teacher, the grades will be reflected on ParentVue. It is common for students in the 2nd and 3rd quarter to receive many Ps in language arts and math.
Since we focus on mastery of Kindergarten standards by the end of the year, we often assess the same topic multiple times throughout the year. As the year progresses, we deepen our learning in each area in order to develop more rigorous and real-world applications of content and skills.

For example, our focus for the area of reading and language arts at the beginning of the year involves knowledge of letters and sounds. As we begin to deepen our understanding of the concept of reading we use our knowledge of sounds to blend sounds into words and then use the knowledge of decoding to read books.

It is not possible to receive a grade of exceeds on the kindergarten report card. But, based on classroom observations and assessments, the teacher will identify each student’s current instructional level and will provide instruction to meet the child’s specific needs. Students who have already consistently met the grade level standards will be provided with differentiated instruction that supports his/her needs. If the student is identified as exceeding grade level standards, the information related to this will be reflected in his/her report card comment.

Q&A For Grade Level Assessment and Grading Practices

1. What determines a level 3 and level 4 questions?
All one-on-one standard based assessments include questions that focus on meeting the end of the year kindergarten expectations. This means they are level 3 or mastery level questions. Your child will not have level 4 questions on their one-on-one based assessments.
2. How do I know if my assessment has a level 4 question embedded? What is a quality example of a level 4 question?

There are not level 4 questions on kindergarten assessments because you cannot receive a level 4 on the report card. Teachers will instead use knowledge the student’s current level of instruction to provide each student with the instruction they need to continue to develop as learners.

3. What is the frequency of assessments?

Assessments occur on a weekly or biweekly schedule. Since students are working toward end of the year expectations, they may take a similar assessment throughout the quarter in order to track progress.

4. Will parents be notified when assessments will occur?

Common Assessments will be indicated on each teacher’s weekly newsletter. The teacher will assess students one-on-one throughout the week. Once your child’s assessment is complete, your child will bring home the assessment in their daily folder. This will let you see how your child is progressing towards end of the year expectations.

State assessments, such as the VKRP (Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program) and PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) are provided to all kindergarten students during specific testing windows. Teachers will notify parents of these testing windows before the test begins.

5. Will students always be notified when assessments occur?

Students will not be notified of all assessments because some assessments are formative or one-on-one student conferences. Students and families are notified before state assessments.
Teachers are not allowed to send home state assessment materials but information related to how your child performed on state assessments can be shared during parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring.

6. Are weekly word study assessments being sent home on a weekly basis?
Kindergarten students do not begin formal Word study. Students will begin practice for first grade. The in-class practice involves identifying and sorting letters or pictures by sounds. Since it is not the expectation that students understand these skills at the beginning of the year, students will be guided through the process of what word study looks like so they will be able to begin learning and applying these skills as they read and write in class.

7. Are there study guides provided to students for assessments?
There are not study guides provided for kindergarten assessments. Our focus in kindergarten is for children to be able to apply skills in authentic situations, such as reading texts on their instructional level or using sets of objects to count and write the corresponding number.

If a student is below grade level and receiving Bs, the teacher can provide supports to facilitate learning at home. These supports could include letter tracing books to encourage letter recognition, number flashcards, or questions to ask while reading a book together.

Our grade level website includes a variety of resources for students who are progressing towards grade level standards. The website will post optional sight word activities as well as letter sound related supports that can be beneficial for all students to use at home.
8. How do I access my child’s assessment to determine deficiencies?
Each time your child completes an assessment, the assessment will be sent home in your child’s daily folder. The teacher will indicate which part of the assessment the child identified correctly. The paper copy will list the name of the assessment and standard assessed. This will help parents see how your child is progressing toward end of the year expectations.

For example, each time your child completes the number ID and writing assessment, you will receive your child’s assessment. The assessment involves students identifying and writing the numbers from 1 to 20. The numbers your child did not identify or write correctly would be ones you could work on at home to reach the end of the year grade level expectations. Parents can refer to the Kindergarten Parent Grade Book Guide that is listed on the Goshen Kindergarten Website if they have any questions related to grade level academic expectations.

9. How frequency are grades being updated on ParentVue?
Each time a student completes an assessment, the grades will be posted on ParentVue. Based on the assessment schedule, parents will often see grades posted weekly or bi-weekly based on when the student has completed their one-on-one assessment with the student.

10. Will diagnostic (pretests/benchmarks) be sent home to parents?
Each time students are assessed, the teacher will send home the most up to date assessment home to students. Many of our our pretest data comes from the beginning of the year state assessments that were completed in the Fall. Since they are state assessments, teacher cannot send home these materials but all Kindergarten teachers are required to discuss this information during the first quarter conference.
As we continue to deepen our learning in each area, the students will complete assessments to track their progress towards the end of the year benchmarks. Each of these assessments will be sent home for parents to review their child’s progress.

PBL Assessments/Performance Based Assessments

1. How are project based learning experiences assessed? Project Based Learning experiences are assessed through Performance Based Assessments (PBAs). These are rubrics created to document learning and success skills that students are applying during the project.

2. Are rubrics being provided to parents for when students are being assessed with a Project Based Assessment? Our Kindergarten team can share a digital copy of the Project Based Assessment with families during the project. Since much of the skills assessed on the PBA are related to observation and application with peers, the completed PBA will come home at the end of the PBL experience.

3. Are Project Based Assessments sent home for parent review? Once a project based learning experience is completed, the student will bring home the completed project based learning rubric with information related to how your child is progressing in content and success skills.

4. Are standards being explained to parents within the Project Based Assessment? The project based assessment assesses students on both content and success skills. The content areas assessed will each have their own section on the rubric. Standards related to the content will be listed on the rubric. An example of a rubric is listed here: Thanksgiving Past and Present PBA
5. Do all Project Based Learning experiences have a rubric?
Not all Project Based Learning experiences in kindergarten have rubrics. During the first quarter, we do not collect grades and the project based learning experiences were short to help students build their stamina for learning and critical thinking. As the year continues, the students will have project based learning experiences that are assessed with rubrics.

6. Do our classrooms include traditional and nontraditional grading tools?
Yes! Our Kindergarten classrooms include traditional and nontraditional grading tools in order to create a well-rounded picture of how your child is doing in Kindergarten. Teachers use a combination of common assessments, standardized assessments, formative assessments/students conferences, and rubrics to determine a student’s current level of instruction.