

STANDARDS BASED GRADING AT AL FATIH ACADEMY

From the Administration



Purpose

The chief purpose of report cards is to clearly communicate student progress to parents and students. A standards-based report card (SBG) was implemented in grades K-1 beginning in the 2014-15 school year and Grades 2 through 5 in the 2015-2016 school year. It is designed to provide parents with a clearer understanding of what students are expected to know and be able to do.

Al Fatih Academy and the Commonwealth of Virginia have clearly defined standards for learning. At Al Fatih Academy, we have incorporated the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) into the AFA curriculum and pacing guides for each subject area. These guides provide the foundation upon which classroom instruction is planned, assessments are designed, and report card language is built. Standards Based Reporting is designed to be an easy-to-understand student progress reporting tool that merges a traditional format with standards-based measures.

AFA's Beliefs about Learning

- Each child is a **unique individual** with varied background experiences and with varying rates of development.
- Each child is growing, changing, and learning at his or her **own rate**.
- Children's **self-concept and academic success go hand-in-hand**. Therefore, every effort is made to encourage children to feel good about what they can do.
- **Learning occurs in a variety of settings and through cooperative interaction** with teachers, peers, and other individuals in the child's environment.
- Assessment and evaluation of the child's progress combine both formal and informal measures, which are conducted over time and in different settings.

What are Curriculum Standards at AFA?

- Standards are statements about learning expectations for students.
- A standards-based report card should send an unmistakable message about what children know, what they are able to do, and what they need to learn in relation to the Virginia SOLs and the AFA curriculum.
- Students are evaluated on standards listed in each content area and progress is reported quarterly relative to expected levels of performance at that point in time.
- Students are also evaluated on success-related behaviors we call "Life, Work, and Citizenship Skills." Feedback in these areas is an important component of the communication between school and home.
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment that are aligned with adopted standards should not be a "secret" that parents and students struggle to discern for themselves. Our reporting system should communicate expectations so as to empower students and allow them to take more ownership of their learning.
- We want to enable parents to see where their child is doing well and where improvement is needed.
- The report cards more clearly define state learning goals and standards for students.
- Just as Al Fatih Academy's curriculum is designed to guide students toward meeting the school, state, and local standards, the report cards now meaningfully convey student progress towards those goals.
- Students in grades K-5 are given marks based on their performance in relation to specific state and AFA standards.
- The Standards Based Grading approach improves alignment as the expectations and goals are the same with every teacher at every grade level.

As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we walk again and again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives.

- Henry David Thoreau

How do AFA Teachers Gather Information About Student Progress Using Standards Based Grading?

- The K-5 report cards should reflect the sum of these measures.
Multiple assessment measures may include but are not limited to:
 - *oral questioning/interviewing,*
 - *teacher-made tests*
 - *student self-assessment,*
 - *observing the student's performance (i.e., shared reading activities, mathematics problem-solving, scientific investigations, etc.), and*
 - *student work samples (i.e., journals, writing samples, projects).*
- The grade should reflect the **student's pattern of performance.**
- Grades should **reflect the learning** that has occurred after the student has had sufficient opportunity to practice.
- It is **not necessary to grade** the performance of the student on **every task.**
- **Look for trends in the student's performance** instead of averaging numerical scores to determine a grade.
- **Use RenWeb** to maintain a two-way communication link between home and school regarding student progress. Research indicates that a direct correlation exists between academic success and home/school involvement.
- An effective standards based reporting system provides **information to move instruction forward.** AFA Standards Based Reporting is designed to benefit children rather than threaten them.
- The K-5 report card should be **shared and discussed regularly with children at home and at school.**

What Does This All Mean For My Child's Grades?

At Al Fatih, we are committed to using the knowledge of where students are now to inform our instructional decisions. Due to current, and hopefully temporary, limitations in our standards based reporting abilities through RenWeb, the student progress that is shared with you may seem confusing. RenWeb is still developing their Standards Based reporting system and AFA will transition to using that platform when it is fully developed.

With standards based reporting, students are not given traditional percentage grades or letter grades. Students are assessed using a 4-point rubric of Achievement Levels as illustrated.

How Can I Tell If My Child is Progressing in Class?

Student's **progress towards the curriculum standards is fluid.** We expect students to demonstrate different levels of achievement as they work towards thorough understanding of the content.

Throughout the learning process, teachers are providing several opportunities for students to learn, practice, apply, and demonstrate their understanding of the skills. **Teachers have identified assignments that accurately reflect student progress and have entered these grades into the gradebook under "Assessment", "Classwork", and "Homework".** You can review your child's progress in class by clicking on these tabs when in RenWeb.

Standards-Based Grades and Progress Reporting

A standards-based progress report:

- measures a student's progress according to how he or she is performing on expected standards.
- provides detailed information about what a student is learning and can demonstrate in each content area.
- is one form of communication from teachers to parents. Al Fatih Academy standards-based progress report is aligned with the VA SOL

Information about reporting progress:

- Learning is individual and students move through the curriculum at different rates.
- Not all standards or skills and concepts within a given standard will be taught and assessed every quarter.
- Students enrolled in the same class may be assessed on particular standards at different times; therefore, some students may have a grade for a standard while others do not.
- All standards will be completely covered by the end of a school year.

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Achievement Levels Four-point Rubric

4 Consistently/Exceeding Standards:

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of content and performance beyond proficiency
- Student exceeds the requirements for grade-level understanding
- Requires no support when demonstrating understanding
- Consistently applies and extends learned concepts and skills independently

3 Usually/Proficient:

- Demonstrates and applies knowledge and a general understanding of content
- Demonstrates proficiency.
- Meets requirements for grade-level understanding
- Requires limited support when demonstrating understanding
- Completes assignment accurately and independently

2 Sometimes/Approaching Standards:

- Demonstrates a partial understanding of content
- Beginning to meet requirements for grade-level understanding
- Requires moderate support when demonstrating understanding
- Requires some extra time, instruction, assistance, and/or practice

1 Seldom/Developing Standards:

- Demonstrates limited understanding of content
- Seldom meets requirements for grade-level understanding
- Requires considerable support when demonstrating understanding
- Requires an extended amount of time, instruction, assistance, and/or practice

*Because the online gradebook is not a Standards Based Report, it will automatically calculate averages. These **averages do not accurately reflect student progress.** The **scores for individual assignments are the most important form of feedback** for you and your child.*