



# Reporting Student Achievement

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. If a student's performance is above the benchmark for the trimester, should he/she have a score higher than a 4?

*Yes, if his/her learning and performance exceed the standard for the trimester, then the rubric score should reflect this.*

2. Can students have a rubric score of 5 or 6 at the end of Trimester 1 or 2?

*Yes, the student score should reflect student performance. If the student demonstrates above standard performance, then the student should receive a mark that reflects above standard achievement.*

3. Is there a district rule that students can't receive anything higher than a 4 the first trimester?

*No, the student score should reflect student performance, regardless of which trimester it is.*

4. Is there a rule that a 6 is unattainable?

*No, the student score should reflect student performance. A 6 is always attainable in any trimester.*

5. Should a teacher show growth over time by giving students successively higher scores each trimester?

*No, the student should have a rubric score that reflects mastery of standards for each distinct trimester. Most of the benchmarks become more rigorous for each successive trimester, so if a student maintains that score each trimester, then the student is showing growth. Having students receive a lower score first or second trimester in order to show growth later doesn't fairly reflect student learning.*

6. What if a student's report card score goes down from what he/she had the previous trimester?

*Expectations each trimester change. Usually, the benchmarks continue to get more rigorous. It is possible that a student's rubric score goes down if he/she fails to make progress. The report card is one way of communicating this. It is helpful to try to take the emotion out of grading and view it as a means of objectively and accurately communicating the actual performance of the student.*



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7. Most of my students are reading beyond grade level. I don't want to give anything higher than a 4 because I'm afraid it will open a floodgate with parents. So is it OK to continue to give them all 4's?

*No, the student score should reflect student performance. Therefore, those students who are reading above grade level with fluency and comprehension should have scores that reflect this. In general, our students are very high performing as measured against the state standards test. It is reasonable that students in CUSD would show performance beyond meeting standard, or in the 5 and 6 range.*

8. On the report card, for each content standard there is a bold box that shows a rubric score. Below that are the sub-standards that show as +, √, or -. Should the rubric number correspond to the symbols that are in the boxes below it?

*Absolutely. For example, if the student has a 3 in the bold box, there should not be all √'s in the boxes underneath. If there are all √'s, then there should be a 4 in the box at the top. Sometimes there might be a mix of √'s, +'s, or -'s. If this is the case, give the most consideration to the substandard(s) that, in your opinion, carry the most weight.*

9. Should we have agreements by teachers at each grade level for report card scores?

*Yes, and hopefully, these guidelines will help grade levels arrive at agreements.*

10. How do we know if what we have determined at our site is in alignment with other schools across the district?

*This would be difficult for individual sites to determine. Instructional Services (IS) can do district-level analyses. If there is misalignment at a site, IS will work with the site to guide it into alignment.*

11. How do we determine the difference between a 5 and a 6?

*Determining a 5 versus a 6 depends on the extent or depth to which a student has surpassed the standard. Evidence of exceeding standard may include performance projects, assessments, and teacher observation.*

*Keep in mind that a student doesn't necessarily need to be performing above grade level to exceed the standard. Here's an example:*

Upper Grade Example:

*A 7<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher said that she had assigned a lab write-up on an experiment that the students had done. She said one student did a perfect write-up. The student met*



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*the standard and would receive a “4” except the teacher said the student also made an analysis of the current week’s experiment to last week’s experiment. Because of the extended depth of the write-up, she was going to give the student a “5”. In addition, the student took the initiative to make a connection between the relevance of the experiment to a real-life situation. Again, the teacher felt that the student had surpassed the expectation or the standard and for these two reasons, she gave the student a “6”. The student wasn’t so much doing above grade level work as she was showing deeper thinking and higher-level thinking.*

### Primary Example:

*During the first week of first grade, a teacher was teaching one-to-one matching in math. She had read the book Ten Apples Up on Top to her class. Then she gave a handout with a picture of the boy from the story. As in the story, students were to draw ten apples on the boy’s head. One student drew 10 apples perfectly spaced on the boy’s head. When asked if he could count them, he counted them by 2’s. When asked if he could count them by three’s, he said “Sure, but you would have 1 left over.” Asked if you could count them by 4’s he said, “Yes, but you would have 2 left over.” He said 5 would work. When the teacher said that was about all you could do, he said, “No, 10 would work fine, too.”*

*Clearly this student had an understanding of math that exceeded the first week of first grade. The teacher could make an anecdotal note of this example and monitor the student during the trimester. If his performance continues to exceed the standard by showing such depth of reasoning, then a rubric score of 6 is easily justified.*

*Please refer to the attached rubrics.*

12. Wouldn’t it be simpler to have a 4-point rubric instead of a 6? That way a 3 could indicate “meeting standard” and a 4 indicate “exceeding standard”. This would eliminate the “What is a 5?” “What is a 6?” concern.

*Originally, CUSD implemented a 4-point rubric on its report cards. Because the district has so many students performing above standard, it didn’t adequately report their performance. The 6-point rubric more accurately reflects the academic levels of our student population.*

13. I use the Houghton-Mifflin end of the unit reading and math assessments. If a student gets 100% correct on these assessments, should his/her rubric score be above a 4?

*Not necessarily. The assessment questions are basically at a level 4. Therefore, answering all of the questions correctly doesn’t necessarily show that the student has exceeded standard. There is probably a high correlation that the student is above standard if he/she answers all questions correctly, but more evidence, such as extension activities that go beyond the standard, should be included in order to determine that the student exceeded the standard and is performing at a level 5 or 6.*



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*In language arts, you can refer to the Houghton Mifflin extension materials:*

*Challenge Handbook*

*Theme Skills Tests for pretest to determine student's proficiency*

*California Summative Tests for pretest to determine student's proficiency*

*Teacher's Resource Blackline Masters*

1. *Observation Checklists*
2. *Selection Tests, particularly questions 1 and 2*

*In math, you can refer to the Houghton Mifflin extension materials:*

*Challenge Masters*

*Problem Solving for Advanced Learners*

14. In the primary grades, should we use the CUSD Early Assessment Tools or the Houghton-Mifflin assessments for language arts to determine how a student compares to the trimester benchmark?

*In order to ensure consistency across the district, we will continue to rely primarily on the CUSD Early Assessment Tools as the primary indicators. Since retentions most frequently occur in the primary grades, it is critical that we use standardized district indicators to measure our students. The Houghton-Mifflin end-of-unit assessments may be used as formative assessments to help determine next instructional steps.*

15. When I use the CUSD Early Assessment Tools, can I assess students until I determine that they have reached the benchmarks and then stop, or do I need to assess further?

*The assessments serve two purposes. First, they are used as one of our multiple measures to determine promotion/retention. In this case, we want to know if the student has met or failed to meet the benchmark. Secondly, they are used to determine the instructional level of each child so we can individualize and differentiate instruction. If we were only using the assessments to determine promotion/ retention, it would be sufficient to assess students only at the benchmark level.*

*However, since we are also using the assessments to determine the instructional level of individual students, even if a student meets the grade-level benchmark, we need to continue assessing beyond the benchmark until we have determined the individual performance level of each student. This information is then used to determine next instructional steps for each student. So, for example, the October Running Record benchmark for a first grade student is Level 5. It is not sufficient to only assess up to a Level 5. Teachers should assess until they have determined the instructional level of each student.*

16. How do I know what the benchmark is? How do I know what mastery is?



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*Teachers from across our district created grade-level benchmarks. They are in the Report Card Maker program. In Report Card Maker, go to File, District Documents, your grade level, and then Benchmarks.*

*As much as we would like to have an absolute statement about “what is mastery”, this isn’t possible. Mastery varies by task. For example, proficiency on one task might be demonstrated by 80% correct. For another task that addresses the same standard, 100% correct might be necessary to demonstrate proficiency. The wording of the standards and the rubrics should help in determining what level of accuracy indicates proficiency.*

17. When determining a trimester mark for the report card, do I use the end-of-the-year standard to decide which score the student has?

*No, the standards describe what the student should know and be able to do at the end of the year. Therefore, the standard is the benchmark for only the last trimester. In our district, students are measured each trimester against the trimester benchmarks. These get more rigorous each trimester. This is why even if a student has the same rubric score each trimester on his/her report card, the student is still showing growth because the benchmark is higher each trimester. District benchmarks should be used for trimester 1 and 2. These are the ones that are in the Report Card Maker program.*

18. What about special education students? Should I use the standard district rubric for them?

*A student’s IEP overrides the report card. For subject areas where a student has an IEP, use the asterisk in the box on the report card. Then either report progress towards the IEP goals and objectives in the comment section or attach a copy of the IEP with a statement in the comment section to refer to it.*

19. Some students don’t hand in homework or don’t complete class work. However, they occasionally do something that demonstrates where they are relative to the standard. I don’t like to give a rubric score that shows the student has mastered the standard when they haven’t completed an acceptable amount of work.

*This can be handled in two different ways.*

*The student has to consistently demonstrate that he/she has mastered standard. If so much work is missing that the teacher doesn’t have evidence to show that the student has demonstrated consistent mastery, then it is fair to reduce the rubric score based on the lack of evidence.*

*However, if the teacher has enough evidence to show mastery but there are still many missing assignments, he/she can give that rubric score and then make a statement in the comment section that although the student has demonstrated a certain level of*



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*proficiency, he/she still has many missing or late assignments. This can also be reflected under the life long learning skills section.*

*Also, for the middle schools which are using the hybrid report card with numeric rubric scores and alpha grades, the rubric score reports only academic performance, but the alpha grade could include non-academic behavior such as not completing assignments.*

20. There is a rubric on the report card, but it's not specific enough for academic content areas. Where can I get more detailed rubrics?

*These are also in the Report Card Maker program. In Report Card Maker, go to the File Menu, District Documents, your grade level, and Rubric Descriptors.*