



Elementary schools now use Proficiency Grading

Parent-teacher conferences are just around the corner, and parents of elementary school students will notice some changes to grading practices this year.

Salem-Keizer's elementary schools have been transitioning to proficiency-based grading over the last two years. The transition is now complete and **all elementary schools report students' academic grades on a proficiency scale of 1 to 4.**

A grade of 3 indicates a student is proficient, or has met the standard.

This scale shows academic proficiency scores:

4	Exceeds proficiency at grade level
3	Proficient at grade level
2	Developing proficiency at grade level
1	Limited proficiency at grade level

In proficiency grading, student grades reflect mastery of state standards. State standards describe the things students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the school year. They can also be thought of as learning goals.

Elementary progress reports show a sample of state standards in different subject areas, such as math, science, reading, writing and others. An example of a second grade math standard is, "Add and subtract two-digit numbers quickly and accurately."

Because state standards are year-end learning goals, students are not expected to achieve grades of 3 or 4 until the end of the year. It could take a full year of instruction to learn and master the concepts described by a state standard.

Similarly, grades of 1 and 2 are expected at the beginning of the year, and do not mean a student is failing.

Proficiency grades only reflect student progress in academics. Classroom behavior, effort, homework performance, tardiness, etc., are still important factors in student performance, and are graded on a separate scale.

This scale shows other measures of student performance:

E	Excellent/Consistently Demonstrates - Needs little/no support, displays confidence
S+, S, S-	Satisfactory/Regularly Demonstrates - Needs some support, showing progress
AC	Area of Concern - Showing limited or no progress
X, blank	Not applicable at this time

The reason for switching to proficiency grading is that it has been proven to boost student learning. It provides helpful feedback to teachers, parents and students by illustrating areas where students need more instruction, and areas where they have achieved mastery.

For more information on proficiency grading, please visit the following links, and talk with your student's teacher:

Watch a short video about proficiency grading: <http://www.skgradguide.com/doing/grades-elementary>

Download a flyer about proficiency grading:

http://www.skgradguide.com/sites/default/files/proficiency-grading_2014.pdf