

Frequently Asked Questions

Grades

1) How grades are calculated? My child's teacher averages everything together so small quizzes count against my child in a big way. I thought quizzes were to be used as a learning tool and therefore would not carry the same weight as major tests. Why is this so? *How can I get my child's grades since Ed-line is not available in Elementary School?*

Students are assessed during each marking period on the skills and objectives delineated for each subject. Teachers grade work throughout the quarter on each skill. All student work is not graded for the report card. Some work is considered practice as students are learning the skill. Starting in the 09-10 school year, work that is graded for report card purposes (often called data points) will be sent home on one day for all grade levels.

Teachers use a combination of trending and averaging when determining the grade your child has earned. Teachers gather 2-3 data points on each skill once instruction and reteaching has occurred. Each data point is given a score of 4 (complete), 3 (general), 2 (developing), or 1 (minimal). Teachers determine a trend for the student's level of proficiency (complete, general, developing, or minimal) with each skill. Teachers average the trends for each skill to determine the overall grade.

Simplified Example:

| Student #1 | Data Point #1 | Data Point #2 | Data Point #3 | Trend | Average | Grade |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Math Skill #1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3.0 | B |
| Math Skill #2 | 3 | 4 | Not needed (already proficient) | 4 | | |
| Math Skill #3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | |

**Sally Ride ES
Grading & Reporting Information
2008-2009
Understanding Your Child's Grades and/or Report Card**

| Kindergarten | |
|--------------|-------------|
| P | Proficient |
| I | In Progress |
| N | Not Yet |

| | 1 st & 2 nd Grade | | | 3 rd , 4 th & 5 th Grade | | |
|--------------------|---|------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|--|
| Proficient | 4 | O Outstanding | Student demonstrates complete understanding | 4 | A 3.6-4.0 | Student demonstrates complete understanding |
| | 3 | S Satisfactory | Student demonstrates general understanding | 3 | B 3.0-3.5 C 2.5-2.9 | Student demonstrates general understanding |
| Not Yet Proficient | 2 | N Needs Improvement | Student demonstrates developing understanding | 2 | D 2.0-2.4 | Student demonstrates developing understanding |
| | 1 | | Student demonstrates minimal understanding | 1 | E <1.9 | Student demonstrates minimal understanding |

Grades (continued)

2) What is the retesting policy by subject?

There is not a formal retesting policy by subject. MCPS Regulation IKA-RA states that “elementary and secondary students are provided with opportunities for reassessments after reteaching in accordance with published procedures” (MCPS, p.8).

MATH

Formal Assessments - Math Unit Tests

Retesting occurs two-to-three weeks after the child has been re-taught the skill(s) necessary. The County advises teachers not to retest shortly after reteaching has occurred. Please note: Retesting scores on all skills may not always be done before the quarter ends and the report card is distributed. Teachers retest throughout the year so some skills may not be mastered until the end of the school year.

Data Points – Math Formative Tests Given Weekly

Students are given at least two formative tests on each skill. These formatives are the retesting opportunities.

READING

Formal Assessments – mClass or MAP-R

Students are given these tests three times during the year (Fall, Winter, and Spring)

Data Points – Reading Formative Tests Given Weekly

Students are given at least two formative tests on each skill. These formatives are the retesting opportunities.

SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES

Reteaching and retesting is done as needed.

3) Why don't I see graded work for science and social studies?

It is possible that you will see less graded work for science and social studies. This is due to the fact that both of these subjects are not taught daily. The science and social studies unit tests are secure. Therefore, you will not see specific test items. Make an appointment with your child's teacher to review the test. You should see at least two graded work samples in each quarter for science and social studies.

4) My child received two Ds on the interim report. How do I develop an action plan to turn this around? Why is my concern regarding a dropping grade not taken seriously? I want my child to get straight As but no one is taken me seriously. Does this mean that no one thinks my child is capable of doing so?

Students are graded on grade-level expectations. Use the flowchart to address additional questions. Sally Ride staff members are expected to have high expectations for all students.

Reading Levels

5) My child has been on the same reading level for 2 quarters in a row. My child's teacher says not to worry but I am concerned. What should I do? What action steps should I take?

Depending on the grade level, students may move reading levels more or less frequently. K-2 students will move at a faster pace than 3-5 students, since there are more reading levels at the primary grades.

If your child is at the same level, follow the steps in the flowchart provided. In addition, ask the teacher what is keeping your child from moving up a level. The teacher can provide types of comprehension questions often asked once students are finished reading. You can support your child at home by asking your child these questions after he/she reads at home. Your child has to be able to orally answer the questions in order to move up a level. It is even better if the student writes his/her answer to the question. However, the written component should not keep a student from moving up a level.

6) My child's reading level is off the chart. How can I help my child? How can I challenge my child?

If your child is off of the chart, he or she has already demonstrated proficiency in reading fluently and comprehending. The best way to challenge him is to have him select books from various genres which interest him. Continue to use the comprehension questions provided by the teacher. In addition, the highest levels of critical thinking involve synthesizing and evaluating what was read. Here are some sentence stems for synthesizing and evaluating text.

Synthesis: Pretend you are a character in the story. Rewrite an episode from your point of view. How would you behave if ___? What would you suggest as another chapter to the book, using the same characters? How would you change the ending? Read what several authors/poets have said on this subject and then write a story/poem/article indicating your feelings on the subject. Questions addressing the synthesis level often start with these words: Create, produce, design, compose, propose, invent, organize, pretend, construct, originate, develop, integrate, plan, rewrite, make up, or perform.

Evaluation: What did you like/dislike about this material? Do you approve of the actions of ___? Would you have done the same as ___ in the situation? What would you have done differently? Do you agree with the author's viewpoint? Why or why not? Write about your favorite character in what you have read? If you were arguing with the author in court, what would your arguments be? How true are the claims in the advertisement? How is the advertisement in relation to the worth of the product? Questions addressing the evaluation level often start with these words: judge, predict, select, rate, prove, choose, decide, evaluate, appraise, conclude, rank, assess, criticize, justify, prioritize, & argue.

Flowchart

Communicating with Staff

- 1) Call the teacher to set up a time to discuss the concern. Express the concern to the teacher. Expect to hear back from the teacher within 24 hours.
- 2) Mutually agree on a day and time to meet face-to-face or talk over the phone.
- 3) At any time during your interactions, if the teacher uses education terms that you do not understand, please tell him/her.
- 4) Mutually agree on what actions can be done at home and at school to address the concern.
- 5) If actions are not taking place, either the parent or staff, should call each other to discuss why. Determine a revised timeline for addressing the concern.
- 6) If appropriate actions have still not taken place after 1 week, contact the principal or assistant principal.