



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
PHILADELPHIA



# MARKING GUIDELINES

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**Note:** These Amended Marking Guidelines are the result of feedback from the field regarding subject area grading. No policy changes have been made; however, the content is streamlined to provide quick, relevant information for consistent grading. Additional resources on content areas, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners (EL) are available in the Marking Guidelines Appendices and can be found on the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment website.

# Introduction

The School District of Philadelphia has implemented a standards-driven curriculum with aligned assessments in all content areas. Grading students requires a defined marking system to provide uniformity across the district. These guidelines rely upon evidence of daily formal and informal observations by classroom teachers. The purpose of this document is to ensure consistency across the district as teachers calculate report card grades which reflect their classroom-based data and observations. Further details can be found on SchoolNet and in the Marking Guidelines.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education Chapter 4 regulations, all students are required to be instructed in the Arts (Visual Arts, Music, Theater, and Dance), Health Education, and Physical Education during the school year. In some cases, schools are not able to provide these subjects during a given Term. If a classroom teacher does not provide the Arts, Health Education, or Physical Education, then no grade will be given during that particular Term.

In kindergarten, students “pre-reading” skills are assessed using aimswebPlus. The assessments consists of Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Initial Sounds (IS), Phoneme Segmentation (PS), and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). Students are also assessed using the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2). Both of these assessments, along with instructional routines and activities, contribute to the grades for Listening, Speaking, Concepts of Print, and Comprehension as listed on the report card. These skills are assessed using the Kindergarten Marking Guidelines scale listed below.

## Kindergarten Marking Guidelines

**0 – Outstanding (100-90):** The student understands all skills and concepts taught during the specific cycle and can demonstrate understanding with little or no teacher support. The student’s progress consistently demonstrates mastery of grade level standards and consistently meets or exceeds grade level goals and objectives.

**S – Satisfactory (89-75):** The student understands most skills and concepts taught during the specific cycle and can demonstrate understanding with average teacher support. The student’s progress demonstrates proficiency in most grade level standards and steady progress towards achieving grade level goals and objectives.

**N – Needs Improvement (74-50):** The student understands few skills and concepts taught during the specific cycle and can demonstrate some understanding with intensive teacher supports. The student demonstrates limited progress in grade level standards and requires strong supports and consistent teacher reinforcement to achieve grade level goals and objectives.

**NG – No Grade: Content Not Taught**

**Note: See Appendix for information regarding Special Education: Students with Disabilities.**

# Students with Disabilities

Grading of students with disabilities should be in collaboration with the special education teacher(s) that service the student.

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) must be provided with the same opportunity to receive grades in relation to expectations for grade level standards; this is a civil right. Since special education students are a heterogeneous group with various disabilities which impact learning, some may not achieve certain grade-level standards without special services and supports.

For students with accommodations, the content of the standard remains the same, but the method for learning and demonstrating mastery of a standard may be adjusted.

Modifications, on the other hand, can mean changing the standard itself, identifying standards that are fundamentally related but also developmentally appropriate. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) team make decisions regarding what content areas, if any, require modifications of the grade level standards. The adaptations should be about student achievement, and they should result in grades that communicate clear information to students and parents.

For all students with an IEP, a progress report must be provided with the report card that identifies how students are performing on appropriately challenging learning tasks as outlined in the goals and objectives of their IEP. \*The IEP team determines how frequently progress is reported to the parent which may vary but a progress report must accompany every quarterly report card.

Progress monitoring must take place to ensure that the elementary and secondary grades are awarded, based on the students' IEP goals, as evidenced by the above reporting requirements.

Students with IEPs who are not meeting their IEP goals, the IEP team must reconvene the IEP meeting to discuss the lack of progress and any additional supports that the student requires to make progress.

Students with IEPs who are not meeting their IEP goals due to attendance/truancy concerns, the IEP team must reconvene the IEP meeting and create a Student Attendance Intervention Plan.

Guidelines for the promotion/retention of students with IEPs:

- Students must have their progress reviewed quarterly at minimum by the IEP team to determine whether they have successfully met their academic goals. Promotion and retention will be based on this review.
- Resources to consider when Grading Students with Disabilities:
  - [Model for Grading Exceptional Students](#)
  - [OCR Questions and Answers on Report Cards and Transcripts For Students with Disabilities Attending Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)
  - [Dear Colleague Letter](#)

## English Learners (EL)

- English Learners may not be given a failing mark based on their level of English proficiency. For any failing marks, teachers (classroom and ESL) must provide documentation that instruction was scaffolded and multiple forms of assessment were utilized. In addition, parents must be notified when a student is not making sufficient progress.
- An English Learner's instructional and independent reading level(s) may be below grade level because of his/her English language proficiency level. When this is the case, a below-grade reading level is not sufficient cause to lower a student's reading grade.
- The classroom teacher must collaborate with the ESL teacher when determining the reading, writing, and oral communication grades.
- Grading in all subjects must follow the same procedures outlined in the alphanumeric Equivalency Chart. However, teachers must use the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, available in the appendices or at [www.wida.us/standards/CAN\\_DOs/](http://www.wida.us/standards/CAN_DOs/), to inform scaffolded instruction and assessments. Grades must be determined based on scaffolded instruction and assessment.
- Students that have been in the country less than 15 school days may be given a NG (No Grade). The reason code is "No grade due to late admission."
- For further information regarding assessment of students in dual language programs, see the Dual Language Program Handbook, downloadable at: <https://www.philasd.org/multilingual/wp-content/uploads/sites/118/2018/09/DL-Handbook-Revised-9-13-18.pdf>

## Promotion and Retention

A pupil may only be required to repeat kindergarten in accordance with the School Code. Retention in kindergarten is permitted, only if the parent or guardian, the teacher, the principal, and the assistant superintendent agree that retention is in the best interest of the child. Such cases must be referred to the assistant superintendent by May 16, of the current school year accompanied with supporting documentation (which should include a letter signed by the parent or guardian and principal). If May 16 falls on a weekend day, the deadline is the Friday prior to May 16. Assistant superintendents must approve all requests for retention.

## Grading Policy

All grades will be recorded in the district's electronic Student Information System (SIS), Infinite Campus. It is suggested that students receive written feedback twice weekly. Therefore, at a minimum, teachers would enter at least two grades per week.

# Reading

In adherence with the PA Core Standards for reading, the purpose of a reading assessment is to measure a student's ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, report on, and interact with an extensive range of print. Teachers evaluate student progress using the following:

- Reading Assessments (DRA2, aimswebPlus, formative assessments, summative assessments, etc.)
- Anecdotal Records' Student-teacher conferences
- Observations
- Analysis of Writing Samples

Students must receive grade appropriate instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics and vocabulary in order to develop fluency and comprehension. Effectively monitoring student progress allows teachers to select appropriate instructional materials to scaffold and sustain student reading-level growth.

Appropriate instructional material is **comprised of varied text** that is inclusive of but not limited to:

- multiple modalities (narrative, informational, argumentative, etc.)
- multiple themes
- grade-level text complexity
- reading behaviors across bands
- student interests
- interdisciplinary works.

Teachers need to accurately identify the reading behaviors students have mastered and the reading behaviors still in need of development and instructional support. Correct identification of reading behavior ability will guide teachers and students to the proper selection of text.

## Instructional and Independent Reading Levels

Students learn to read and develop as readers at different rates. Using DRA2 periodically enables you to monitor changes over time in students' reading performances and confirms ongoing observations and impressions of student reading achievement. Teachers will use the DRA2 Continuum to track a student's level for the following reporting categories: **reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension**. For each reporting category, students will be identified as emerging, developing, independent, or advanced.

For an Independent level the student's total Oral Reading Fluency score and total Comprehension score must be at least within the Independent range on the Continuum. If the student's scores are below Independent, reassess with a lower-level text at another time.

See page Developmental Reading Assessments Guide, pages 40 - 66, in the DRA2 Teacher's Guide.

The accuracy of the DRA2 level can be verified by working with students in guided reading or small group instruction. If the DRA2 level is the proper instructional level, the student should demonstrate effective use of most of the reading behaviors (e.g., using word attack strategies at difficulty or self-correcting/rereading when meaning is lost) associated with that reading level. **See Appendix for Reading Behaviors.**

## Goals for Independent Reading Levels in Kindergarten

Kindergarten	1st Term (November)	2nd Term (February)	3rd Term (April)	4th Term (June)
Target Level (Proficient)	PR and above	A and above	B and above	C and above
Strategic Intervention Needed		PR	A	B
Intensive Intervention Needed		PR	PR and below	A and below

Shaded boxes indicate the target Independent Level for Kindergarten. The Independent Level will be placed on the report card.

**Kindergarten** students who are reading **independently at level C** by the end of the school year are reading on grade level.

## Goals for Instructional Reading Levels in Kindergarten

Kindergarten	1st Term (November)	2nd Term (February)	3rd Term (April)	4th Term (June)
Target Level (Proficient)	A and above	B and above	C and above	D and above
Strategic Intervention Needed	PR	A	B	B, C
Intensive Intervention Needed		PR	A and below	A and below

An Instructional Reading Level is determined by daily instruction and recorded in Student Information System (SIS). The Instructional Reading Level will not be placed on the report card.

## Reading Level Equivalency Chart

Grade	DRA2 Level	Reading Level
K	A	PR
K	1	A
K	2	B
K	3	B
K	4	C
K	6	D
1	8	E
1	10	F
1	12	G
1	14	H
1	16	I
1	18	J
2	20	K
2	24	L
2	28	M
3	30	N
3	34	O
3	38	P

# Writing

In adherence with our instructional model based on the PA Core Writing Standards, the purpose of assessment is to measure students' growth in their ability to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding, and conveying thoughts, feelings, as well as real and imaginary experiences. Teachers evaluate student progress and growth over time by assessing a collection of writing. Marks must be based on the body of the student's writing during the report period.

A student will develop as a writer, at his/her own pace, as the teacher models and provides reading and writing experiences. A student's writing in kindergarten should not be expected to move sequentially from Stage 1 to 6 and will rarely exhibit all the traits of any one stage. Writing samples from an individual student may exhibit traits from several stages depending on different writing experiences throughout the school year. Teachers should expose students to a variety of literature and provide numerous opportunities to write. The stages of a student's writing can be determined by identifying the pattern that most closely matches the student's writing.

At least one piece of writing should be published each term. Students will often work on a single writing sample over a period of time as they revise and improve their writing. This gives the teacher a view of each student's development and growth over time.

## **K-1 Developmental Writing Stages**

### **Stage 1**

- Draws a picture only
- Tells about drawing
- Uses scribbling and letter-like symbols
- Draws a picture and uses scribbling
- Imitates writing

### **Stage 2**

- Draws a recognizable picture
- Uses own drawing to tell a story and is able to tell an adult a word, label, thought, or a complete sentence about the drawing.
- Attempts written symbols (circles, shapes, squiggles, or more controlled lines) and may say a story
- Attempts to read message
- Writes own name

### **Stage 3**

- Draws a picture and is able to tell an adult a complete sentence or a story that relates to the picture
- Begins to make the connection that written symbols convey a message
- May use strings of numbers and letters
- May use names or parts of names
- May copy words from the environment
- May spell some frequently used and/or familiar words correctly

- May demonstrate limited knowledge of letter-sounds and is able to tell what the letters says
- Knows the direction of print

### **Stage 4**

- Draws a picture and labels it
- Connects letters and sounds, usually beginning and ending and some vowels, uses phonetic spelling
- Spells some frequently used words correctly
- Knows the direction of print
- Demonstrates the spacing between words
- Text may contain incomplete thoughts and/or simple sentences
- Parts of text may not be understandable unless told to an adult

### **Stage 5 - Goal End of Kindergarten, Beginning of Grade 1**

- Writes complete thoughts in sentence form (capitalization and punctuation may be absent or incorrect)
- Writes sentences that make sense (sentences may or may not be related but text has no sense of story)
- Writes sentences that may be short, simple and uses them more than once
- Represents most letters and sounds in words (phonetic spelling is evident)
- Spells many frequently used words correctly; may spell other familiar words correctly
- Text is readable without telling it to an adult

### **Stage 6 - Goal End of Grade 1**

- Begins to develop a sense of story (may have appropriate beginning, ending and/or logical connection of events)
- Writes sentences that focus on a topic much of the time
- Composes text that contains basic ideas with some details
- Begins to vary sentence lengths and patterns
- Spells most frequently used words correctly
- Represents most sounds in words; spells some words correctly
- Begins to use some correct capitalization and punctuation
- May attempt to use talk in writing
- Begins to include colorful words to describe objects, people and events
- Begins to choose words and phrases that show evidence of literary language (writes the way authors do)
- Begins to express ideas in a creative way or writing may contain original ideas

## Mathematics

The goal of mathematics instruction is to promote conceptual understanding, while supporting procedural fluency and application. Mathematical proficiency in kindergarten includes Counting and Cardinality, Numbers and Operations in Base Ten, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Geometry, and Measurement and Data.

**Teachers should support students consistently as they:**

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Model with mathematics
- Use appropriate tools strategically
- Attend to precision
- Look for and make use of structure
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

Grading in mathematics is consistent with the criteria as indicated on Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3.

## Science

In adherence with our instructional model based on the Pennsylvania Standards for Science, the purpose of assessment is to formulate useful questions that provoke scientific inquiry. Assessment is embedded in the science instruction and is part of the learning process. Teachers have multiple opportunities to evaluate student progress using a variety of strategies (science notebooks, class participation, observation and hands on activities).

Grading in science is consistent with the criteria as indicated on Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3.

## Social Studies

In adherence with our instructional model based on the Pennsylvania Standards for Social Studies, the purpose of assessment is to measure students' understanding of civics and government, geography, and history. Teachers have multiple opportunities to evaluate student progress using a variety of strategies (class participation, journal writing, and portfolios).

Grading in social studies is consistent with the criteria as indicated on Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3.

## Digital Literacy and Computer Skills

The purpose of assessing digital literacy and computer skills is to measure introductory levels as indicated in the International Society for Technology in Education and the PA Business Computer Information Technology Standard.

Teachers are encouraged to use multiple opportunities to evaluate student progress using the following suggested assessment tools:

- Anecdotal Records
- Class Participation
- Finished Projects (individual/group)
- Logs
- Portfolios
- Presentations
- Quizzes/Tests
- Reports
- Rubrics

**See Appendix** for additional resources.

Scoring: At least 4-6 assessments are needed to calculate one report card grade depending upon the number of times the students receive computer lab instruction per week.

Assessment for each marking period should be based on the student engagement in the following:

- Internet Safety
- Computer Basics
- Keyboarding
- Word Processing
- Graphic Organizers
- Paint/Draw
- Databases
- Spreadsheets/Chart
- Presentation skills

## Health Education

In adherence with our instructional model based on the national, state and local standards, the purpose of assessment is to measure a student's acquisition of knowledge and skills related to health concepts. These concepts include personal health, human growth and sexuality, nutrition and disease prevention. Teachers have multiple opportunities to evaluate student progress by using interactive activities that promote wellness.

Grading in health is consistent with the criteria as indicated on Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3. **See Appendix for additional information on instruction.**

## Physical Education

In adherence with our instructional model based on the national, state and local standards for physical education, the purpose of assessment is to measure a student's knowledge and skills that will help them maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. Assessment is ongoing and progressive as students practice and improves skills and knowledge in the areas of movement and principles of exercise. Physical fitness assessment tools are used to evaluate progress.

Grading in physical education is consistent with the criteria as indicated on Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3. **See Appendix for additional information on instruction.**

## Visual Arts

In adherence with our instructional model based on the State Standards for Arts and Humanities Education, the purpose of assessment is to measure a student's ability to observe, reflect and participate both in the arts of their culture and the cultures of others. Teachers have multiple opportunities to evaluate student progress by using observations and portfolios.

Grading in visual arts is consistent with the criteria as indicated on Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3. **See Appendix for additional information on instruction.**

## Music

In adherence with our instructional model based on the State Standards for Arts and Humanities Education, the purpose of assessment is to measure a student's understanding of musical concepts and performance. Teachers have multiple opportunities to evaluate student progress by using observation and performance checklists.

Grading in music is consistent with the criteria as indicated on page Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3. **See Appendix for additional information on instruction.**

## Dance

In adherence with our instructional model based on the State Standards for Arts and Humanities Education, the purpose of assessment is to measure a student's understanding of rhythms, patterns, balance, elements of movement and interpretation. Teachers have multiple opportunities to evaluate student progress by using observations and performance checklists.

Grading in dance is consistent with the criteria as indicated on Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3. **See Appendix for additional information on instruction.**

## Theatre

In adherence with our instructional model based on the State Standards for Arts and Humanities Education, the purpose of assessment is to measure a student's understanding of theater vocabulary, script writing, and enhanced story reading and performance. Teachers have multiple opportunities to evaluate student progress by using observations and performance checklists.

Grading in theater is consistent with the criteria as indicated on Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3. **See Appendix for additional information on instruction.**

## World Languages

In adherence with our instructional model based on the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages National Standards, the purpose of assessment is to evaluate a student's level of communication skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in world language. Teachers have multiple opportunities to evaluate student progress by using oral and written tests, and activities such as dialogues and presentations. 11

Grading in world languages is consistent with the criteria as indicated on Kindergarten Marking Guidelines Chart page 3. **See Appendix for additional information on**