

Dear Athlos Academy of St. Cloud families,

You may have noticed that your child's Athlos Academy report card looks different from traditional report cards. You do not see letters or percentages, only the numbers 1-4. Instead of the traditional list of class names, you see subjects such as language arts, math and science split in to several sub-categories. Why the difference? Athlos Academy uses a process called standards-based grading, which is a completely different way of grading and re-orting on student progress. The goal behind standards-based grading (and standards-based report cards) is to give you an accurate, more informative snapshot of what your child knows and can do at a particular point in time. In contrast to traditional grading methods, this type of report card allows you to identify your child's specific strengths and areas for improvement.

We want to help you understand your child's report card and how the grades were calculated. Here are answers to some questions you may have:

? What do the numbers mean?

Take a look at the attached document that outlines Athlos Academy's four-point scale and consider hanging it up in your child's homework space. The numbers and their descriptions are meant to generate discussion between teachers, students, and families. Be sure to read through the descriptions at each level, noticing how the language used can encourage students as they work toward mastery of grade-level knowledge and skills.

The Athlos four-point scale represents a different yet powerful way of looking at student work and therefore cannot be converted into the more familiar letter or percentage grades.

? How are grades calculated?

Your child's report card grade is based on their mastery of knowledge and skills over time. We put more emphasis on the most recent, consistent level of performance so if your child struggled with a new concept when first encountering it, those earlier, low grades do not negatively impact the final report card grade. This is different from a traditional grading system where a student's performance for an entire quarter is averaged together meaning early quiz scores that were low would be averaged together with more proficient performance later in the course, resulting in a lower overall grade than current performance indicates.

At Athlos, practice assignments (homework and classwork) are just that, practice. Practice work is graded by teachers in order to offer feedback and support, but these assignments are not factored into a final grade. Graded final assessments (e.g. end-of-unit tests, quizzes, or projects) are only given after students have had plenty of time to learn and practice concepts. These final assessments are viewed as celebrations of learning in which students can show off what they know and can do.

? What are "Characteristics of a Successful Learner"?

Athlos report card grades are based only on content-area knowledge and skills. Grades are never affected by a student's behavior (such as effort, participation, time on task, cooperation, and attitude). We know that behavior is an important aspect of a student's success in school, so behaviors are reported separately in the "Characteristics of a Successful Learner" sections of the report card.

? Why is there an "N/A" in several categories?

An "N/A" means that content in this category was not assessed during this quarter. Our teachers create engaging units to ensure students gain a deeper understanding of specific content over a longer period of time. For example, instead of science and social studies both being taught every day or every other day, students may dig into a science topic every day for several weeks or a whole quarter. Then, once they have mastered the science content, they can turn their focus to a social studies topic.

? What can I do now to support my child?

- Review this report card with your child. Ask him/her to reflect on areas of strength and areas of challenge. Celebrate successes and help your child set goals for improvement.
- Spend time looking at the "Characteristics of a Successful Learner" section of this report card with your child. Does anything stand out? Discuss with your child any goals or strategies for improvement in these areas.
- Feel free to contact your child's teacher if you have questions relating to grades or concerns regarding your child's performance.
- Please [sign and return the report card envelope](#) to your child's teacher, letting the teacher know that you have seen and discussed the report card with your child.