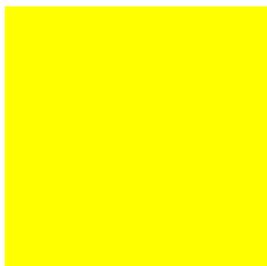


PARENT GUIDE  
TO ELEMENTARY  
REPORT CARDS



**BETHLEHEM**  
AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



## Introduction

The purpose of the Bethlehem Area School District’s report card is to clearly and accurately communicate to parents their child’s progress relative to Pennsylvania Academic Standards and Bethlehem Area School District curriculum. Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards “offer a set of rigorous, high-quality academic expectations all students should master by the end of each grade level. Pennsylvania’s standards are robust and relevant to the real world and reflect the knowledge and skills our young people need to succeed in life after high school, in both post-secondary education and a globally competitive workforce” (Pennsylvania Department of Education). These standards represent what a child should **know** and **be able to do** by the end of their specific grade level. The standards provide a focus for aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment.

With our report card, we want you to understand your child’s progress toward meeting these grade level standards. In Literacy and Mathematics, we break down your child’s progress to specific skills and knowledge. In other content areas and with certain work habits, we report a single competency for the entire course or behavior. In each case, we indicate progress with the following scale.

	Description	Notes
4	Excels within grade level expectations	Student demonstrates consistent higher-level thinking, understanding and/or performance. Typically, few students perform at this level.
<b>3</b>	<b>Meets grade level expectations</b>	<b>TARGET:</b> Student demonstrates proficiency on ALL grade level skills in this topic. <b>This is grade level standard and should be celebrated!</b>
2	Approaching grade level expectations	Student may demonstrate some proficiency on foundational skills, but does not yet meet all standards.
1	Not yet making sufficient progress toward grade level expectations	Student demonstrates limited proficiency on only basic or initial skills.
N/A	Not yet assessed	Topic may not yet be introduced, or students have not yet been asked to demonstrate proficiency.

## Competencies

We know that it can be confusing to understand what we mean when we break out an individual skill on the report card, so we are providing an explanation of each competency in Literacy and Math. If you have any questions after reading the descriptions, please contact your child's teacher.

## Literacy

### *Foundational Skill: Phonemic Awareness (K-2)*

**Phonemes** are the small units of sound that make up the spoken language. (Think of the “k” sound that starts off the word “cat”. That “k” sound is a Phoneme). Students who demonstrate phonemic awareness understand that words are made up of those small sounds. Students with phonemic awareness can identify, isolate and manipulate language at the individual sound level. They can break out, or **segment**, the individual sounds in a word, and put sounds together, or **blend**, to create a word out of sounds. More advanced students can manipulate phonemes, deleting, substituting or reversing the sounds within words.

### *Foundational Skill: Decoding (K-2)*

**Decoding** is the process of translating print into speech by rapidly matching a letter or combination of letters (called **graphemes**) to their sounds (called **phonemes**). Students who are on track in decoding can make the connection between print and speech, even for “nonsense” words like “FUM” or “MIP”.

### *Foundational Skill: Listening Comprehension (K-2)*

**Listening comprehension** is a blanket term for the many processes that are involved in understanding and making sense of spoken language. At very young levels, we start by **recognizing** speech sounds, then understanding the **meaning** of individual words, and eventually developing meaning by understanding entire sentences using **syntax** (the grammatical structure of words and phrases to create coherent sentences), **inflection** (the change in a person's tone or pitch as they are speaking), and **context**. While this is obviously important before a child learns how to read, it is easy to see how this skill carries throughout our lives.

### *Foundational Skill: Vocabulary (K-2) / Vocabulary (3-5)*

**Vocabulary** is the knowledge of words and word meanings. Vocabulary development forms the basis of our growing ability to comprehend the spoken and written world around us. Students learn the meaning of words through explicit instruction (with teachers providing new words with their pronunciations and meanings) and also implicitly through context clues. Vocabulary development also includes the study of **morphology**, which involves learning about the prefixes, suffixes, roots, bases and origins of words.

### *Text Comprehension (1-2) / Comprehension (3-5)*

**Comprehension** is understanding what a text is all about. More than just stringing together the meaning of individual works, comprehension involves putting text together with prior knowledge, asking and answering questions about the text, summarizing and discussing the text with and for others.

### *Writing (K-5)*

**Writing** is the process of documenting ideas for various purposes. Students learn to write by organizing their thoughts, planning their response to a prompt, choosing good descriptive language, using text evidence to strengthen their arguments, revising their work, and presenting to an audience

### *Speaking and Listening (K-5)*

**Speaking** and **listening** refer to the ability to listen and respond to others, speaking and presenting publicly, participating in group discussions, and interacting with others. Speaking and listening in the classroom are vital, because comprehension develops not just from reading, but also from listening and communicating.

## Math

### *Counting and Cardinality (K)*

In kindergarten, students develop one-to-one correspondence, connecting a number with an object and being able to **count** them with understanding. **Cardinality** refers to the ability to know how many things are in a set and knowing that when we count items, the last word we use is the number of items. (For example, we have some apples, and we count “one, two, three”. By ending on “three”, we know we have three apples total.) Learning to count on from a given number, instead of always having to start back at one is also developed.

### *Numbers and Operations in Base Ten (K-5)*

Working with **numbers** through elementary school, students develop the understanding of what numbers mean, being able to break them apart and put them back together and developing understanding of place value. (For example,  $243 = 2$  hundreds,  $4$  tens, and  $3$  ones or  $24$  tens and  $3$  ones.) Mental math strategies are taught and developed throughout the grades. They can accurately apply the concepts of place value when they perform addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers. By fifth grade, students understand the value and work with decimal numbers to the thousandths.

### *Numbers and Operations – Fractions (3-5)*

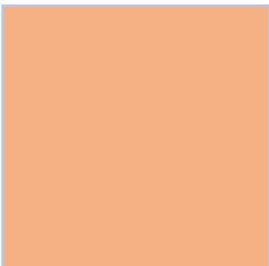
Beginning in grade three, students develop an understanding of **fractions** as representations of numbers, building fractions and learning equivalent forms, and exploring decimal notations for fractions. They learn to order and compare fractions and can visualize them on a number line. By grade four students are able to add and subtract fractions, while in fifth grade they learn to multiply and divide fractions.

### *Operations and Algebraic Thinking (K-5)*

Beginning with the simple concept of putting together (**addition**) and breaking apart (**subtraction**), students then progress through the other operations. **Multiplication** involves equal groups and division often includes interpreting remainders. The beginnings of **algebra** form as they learn how to apply learned strategies, represent problems in words, manipulatives and symbols; generate and analyze patterns; and learn the relationships between operations.

### *Geometry (K-5)*

Simple **geometry** concepts such as shapes and their attributes are developed in the primary grades. Students in grades four and five explore lines and angles, the coordinate plane and classification. Classification is based on numerous properties and the correlation to fraction concepts is also part of their learning.



### *Measurement and Data (K-5)*

Students learn how to **measure** distances, time, and money in elementary school. They develop their understanding of units of measurement and of converting units. Combining their understanding of geometry with development in operations like addition and multiplication, they learn measurement concepts like perimeter, area, and volume. Various formulas are learned and applied to solving problems using multiple operations. They also learn how to collect, represent and interpret **data**. Students experience information through various types of graphs.

### **Other Content Areas**

Students also take other subjects that are not broken down into separate competencies. You will see just a single mark for the following subjects.

Science	Social Studies	Art	Digital Literacy
Music	Physical Education	Spanish	ESL (if appropriate)

### **Work Habits and Citizenship**

In the Work Habits and Citizenship sections of the report card, we strive to communicate information about your child’s progress on important skills that will help them to learn better throughout school, work well with others, and participate in society. In each category, your child compared to developmentally appropriate level. (“Using Class Time Productively” looks very different for a kindergarten student vs. a fifth grader!) The reporting categories for Work Habits and Citizenship are listed below.

<b>Work Habits- Kindergarten</b>	<b>Work Habits- Grades 1-5</b>	<b>Citizenship- Grades K-5</b>
Uses class time productively Listens attentively Follows directions Works cooperatively Demonstrates effort Participates appropriately Respects others Follows school rules	Uses class time productively Listens and follows directions Completes homework Works cooperatively with others Demonstrates effort Reads independently Writes legibly	Respects others Follows school rules Behaves appropriately

## Information for Parents of Special Education Students and English Learners

If your child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or is identified as an English Learner, there are modifications and accommodations in your child's IEP or based on ELS level to support his or her progress on grade level standards as assessed.

It is important to understand that while your child may be proficient in some areas, there may be areas related to your child's learning disabilities or language level that may be Developing or Beginning to Develop, according to state standards.

For special education students, more specific measures of your child's skills can be found in his/her IEP. Your child's special education teacher will have data and progress reports to share with you regarding your child's progress toward IEP goals.

### Other Information

Finally, your child's report card also contains other important information.

Your child's teacher may want to use written or numbered comments to give you more specific information about your child's progress. If you see numbers to the right of your child's grades, please see the key on the report card to read the comment.

At the end of the year, most children have made great progress toward grade level standards and are ready to move on. Your teacher will indicate that by selecting "**Promoted to Next Grade.**" If your child is close to standard, but not quite there, your teacher may select "**Placed in Next Grade**" to indicate this.

If your child is falling significantly below standard, you may see that your teacher has notified you that "**Retention is Being Considered.**" In rare circumstances, a child's progress may make it necessary to have them repeat a grade to make sure they have all the important skills they need to be successful. If this is the case, you will see the "**Retained in Current Grade**" choice selected.

You will also find on the report card the number of days that your child was absent or tardy.

## Assessment

Your child's teacher will use a variety of tools to measure your child's progress toward the standards, including formal tests and quizzes, informal observations, classroom performance, and homework

## Conferences

In the Bethlehem Area School District, you have two different opportunities to get more information about your child's progress. In the Fall, we schedule Parent Teacher Conferences, to give you an opportunity to speak individually with your child's teacher about their performance. In the late Winter, we schedule Student Led Conferences. These conferences, part of our *Leader In Me* initiative, give our students an opportunity to own their learning and explain to you directly their strengths and growth areas. Of course, you can always contact your child's teacher with questions throughout the school year. We are partners in your child's education!

## Conclusion

The Bethlehem Area School District and our teachers strongly value the partnerships we have with our families. We hope this report card communicates important information about your child's progress, and underscores the commitment we have to building a strong future for your child, for Bethlehem, and for our communities. If you have any questions about academics or your student's performance, we encourage you to build a relationship with your child's teacher.

