

Making the Most of Your Child’s Outcomes-Based Report Card

The elementary report card used in Elk Island Public Schools is designed to give you a clear, realistic and useful report about your child’s learning.

Read this publication to learn

- ☑ what outcomes-based reporting is about
- ☑ how to read your child’s report card
- ☑ how to use the report card to help you support your child’s learning

What is outcomes-based reporting?

- ☐ The new elementary report card is tied directly to the Alberta curriculum. Alberta’s curriculum is outcomes-based—it describes what your child is expected to know and be able to do each year in each subject. The report card tells you if your child has met these expectations.
- ☐ The report card focuses on clear descriptions of how well your child has acquired the key skills, knowledge and attitudes in each subject.
- ☐ The report card does not involve percentages in elementary school. Instead it uses four levels of achievement to help describe how well your child has met expectations.

How do I read my child’s report card?

Here is part of a typical report card:

These are **learning outcomes** that Alberta students in Grade 6 are expected to achieve.

The four **achievement Levels** used by teachers are: Excellent, Proficient, Acceptable, Limited. “Proficient” describes the level of achievement that we hope most students will attain.

English Language Arts Grade 6	
Identifies and uses organizational structures and text features to enhance understanding	Proficient
Summarizes texts indicating the connections among events, characters, and settings	Proficient
Communicates ideas and information using a variety of formats for specific purposes and audiences	Excellent
Edits for correct sentence structure, capitalization, punctuation, spelling and grammar	Acceptable

The four **effort levels** used by teachers are: Commendable, Sufficient, Inconsistent, Insufficient.

Teachers may use **comments** to provide information about a student’s achievement, progress or effort, and to give suggestions about what to do next.

Effort: Sufficient

Comments: Betty purposefully uses charts, headings, and clues from the author when determining important facts and events in books, articles, and videos. Her responses during the Time Detectives unit were meaningful and supported by evidence in the text. Betty's revised written drafts, such as her persuasive letter to J.K. Rowling, are filled with rich content and voice. Her pieces will improve if she takes time to reread and edit for spelling and complete sentences. The class has enjoyed your many humorous personal narratives, Betty!

Look at the **learning outcomes** selected by the teacher.

- These learning outcomes describe the core of what your child and the class have been learning during the term.
- These learning outcomes are important for the continued success of your child in this subject.
- Alberta Education publishes curriculum handbooks for parents that further describe what students are expected to know and be able to do in each grade. These handbooks are available at <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/parents/handbooks/>

Look at the **achievement levels** determined by the teacher.

- Definitions of the four achievement levels are:
 - Excellent—achievement that is commendable. The student demonstrates an in-depth and broad understanding of a subject outcome at this grade. Some students achieve at this level.
 - Proficient—achievement that is competent. The student demonstrates a well-developed and consistent understanding of a subject outcome at this grade. Most students achieve at this level.
 - Acceptable—achievement that is adequate. The student demonstrates a basic and/or inconsistent understanding of a subject outcome at this grade. Some students achieve at this level.
 - Limited—achievement that is not yet at an acceptable level. The student demonstrates inadequate understanding of a subject outcome at this grade. Few students achieve at this level.
- The teacher and your child have been collecting the assessment evidence that has resulted in these achievement levels being determined by the teacher. The evidence may include:
 - scores from tests
 - achievement levels from projects, presentations, performances and other significant tasks
 - checklists and notes made by the teacher when observing your child at work
 - actual samples of your child's work
- Your child should be able to explain what he or she has learned and how the assessment evidence shows this.
- Students achieving mostly at the proficient level are making very good progress. To achieve mostly at this level throughout the year means that your child has reached a strong understanding of the skills and knowledge that are central to the subject. He or she has been solidly completing significant assessment tasks.

Look at the **effort level** determined by the teacher:

- Here are definitions of the four effort levels:
 - Commendable—effort is exemplary. The student enthusiastically self-initiates meaningful engagement in learning activities, is highly focused on tasks, and is very productive.
 - Sufficient—effort is appropriate. The student typically begins learning activities voluntarily, is usually focused on tasks, and is generally productive.
 - Inconsistent—effort is sporadic and undependable. Effort is sometimes sufficient or commendable, but is also sometimes insufficient.

- Insufficient—effort is not yet at an acceptable level. The student is reluctant to engage in learning activities, has difficulty focusing on tasks without prompting and direction, and is sometimes unproductive.
- Students sometimes find that more effort results in higher achievement in some subjects, but not in all subjects. In some subjects, additional assistance or support may be the most effective way to increase achievement.

Look at the **comments** written by your child's teacher:

- Comments are an important part of your child's report card. The teacher may use comments to provide you with information about your child's achievement, effort or progress, and about what your child's next steps in learning should be.
- Comments may give you some ideas about things you might want to discuss at your child's student-parent-teacher conference.

How can I use the report card to help me support my child's learning?

A major factor leading to higher achievement is the use of effective assessment strategies—by teachers, by students, and by parents. Consider adopting some of the following strategies:

- Plan not to be surprised by the format of the report card in November—this will leave you with more time to discuss your child's learning at conference time:
 - Read about assessment and reporting in materials available from the school, the district and Alberta Education
 - Talk with your child's teacher about the report card and how it works
- Plan not to be surprised by what your child's own report card says in November!
 - A report card should never be a surprise—it is based on key information about your child's learning that has been collected during the term, that your child is aware of and that you have access to
- Discuss each of the learning outcomes with your child and the achievement level he or she attained:
 - Your child should be able to explain to you what he or she has been learning, and describe the evidence that has been collected to show the learning
- Discuss with your child where he or she believes his or her strengths lie:
 - Focus on the achievement levels shown for each learning outcome. Perhaps your child showed Excellent for one outcome and Proficient for another outcome. Discuss why that might be.
 - Ask your child about his or her hopes and intentions for continuing to learn.
- Discuss with your child the level of effort given on the report card for each subject. Effort is the application of energy to learning. The amount of effort students put into learning is often related to the following factors. Discussing these factors with children may help them to apply more effort:
 - Their understanding of the relevance or importance of the learning
 - A clear understanding of what is expected of them
 - Their self-esteem and self-confidence
 - Their desire to learn and their interest in the subject
 - Their personal assessment of what they know and are able to do

- Their personal assessment of their own effectiveness, potential and their hope of progress
- Discuss the levels determined by the teacher for your child's learner attributes. Learner attributes are the characteristics of students that can help them be successful learners at school. This may be a good time to focus on how your child learns and how he or she prepares for learning. You may wish to discuss with your child the strategies he or she uses for:
 - preparing for major assessment tasks
 - learning as much as possible during lessons
 - managing homework

This is an example of a social attribute

Learner Attributes

Accepts responsibility	Commendable
Respects the property of self and others	Consistently
Completes assignments/projects	Consistently
Demonstrates organizational skills	Consistently

This is an example of work/study attribute

Comments: Betty enjoys class discussions and is an active participant in all class activities. Betty could try to improve her listening skills by attending to detail. She often misses important details in instructions. Betty is quick to begin work in class, but her focus occasionally falters leaving her unable to complete tasks during class time. Overall, however, Betty your hard work and enthusiasm for learning are commendable.

The four **levels** used by teachers to describe students' learner attributes are: Commendable, Sufficient, Inconsistent, Insufficient.