



Curriculum-Based Report Cards

A Parent Guide

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Curriculum Based Report Card (CBRC) FAQs

Q: What do the terms Curriculum Based, Standards Based, or Skill Based mean?

A: Curriculum Based, Standards Based, and Skill Based are similar terms used to describe a method for achieving student grades. Standards, or skills, specify what all students should know and be able to do by the end of the school year. The State and National Standards have been developed by the Missouri and United States Departments of Education.

The term “Standards Based” is the most often used term because public schools are using the State and National Standards along with the Common Core as their curriculum. Since Holy Cross Academy is a Catholic school, we are free to determine our own curriculum. The Missouri State Standards, as well as the National Standards, are the base of our curriculum. However, we are not limited to these standards the way public schools are. We have developed, and annually revise, a curriculum we feel best serves our students. Therefore, HCA has decided to use the term “Curriculum Based”.

As a reminder, the curriculum for grades K-5 is available on the HCA website. Until the middle school curriculum is ready to be uploaded this summer, you may obtain a copy by contacting Mrs. Janet Dolan- principal of the middle school.

Q: How is curriculum based grading different from traditional grading?

A: In the traditional 100-point grading system, a student’s grades are typically based on all of the work assigned in class, including class work, homework, projects, quizzes, and tests. These scores are often arranged in the grade book, and given more or less points based on their perceived value rather than on the essential standards for the class. The grade may also include points for non-academic factors, such as participation, effort, or attitude.

Curriculum based grading does not separate tests, homework, or projects. All of the work a student does is used to assess the student’s mastery of the essential curriculum. Student scores are tracked by the standards, which gives the teacher, student, and parent a very detailed picture of which standards a student has learned. Non-academic factors like behavior, attitude, and attendance are not included in this grade but are reported in the Learner Quality section of the report card.

Q: What is the difference between a traditional and curriculum based report card?

TRADITIONAL REPORT CARD	CURRICULUM BASED REPORT CARD
<p>If a student did poorly on work in the beginning of the course, but then was able to fully understand the concepts that were presented, the student would be penalized as all scores are averaged into a final grade.</p>	<p>Although grades are given throughout the course, the student's final grade is determined by how well they understand the standard at the end of the quarter. The grades are not averaged with any other standards as to give parents a more detailed and accurate view of how the child is progressing academically.</p>
<p>Assessment based on teacher-defined criteria</p>	<p>Assessments based on the HCA curriculum</p>
<p>Grades are given for each subject area, such as reading, writing, math, etc.</p>	<p>Subject areas are sub-divided into a list of concepts/skills that students should master. Each item on the list is scored.</p>
<p>Work habits may be calculated in the letter grade (missing assignments, late work, homework, effort, etc.)</p>	<p>Work habits (Learner Qualities) are reported separately and are not calculated in students' proficiency towards a standard.</p>
<p>Measures how well students do in comparison to their classmates.</p>	<p>Measures how well an individual student is doing in relation to the grade-level standards. This will give parents a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses and encourage all students to do their best.</p>
<p>Gives a compiled grade for work completed in a subject area. (ex: Reading=B, Math=C, etc.)</p>	<p>Measures how well each student is progressing in relation to each of the grade-level standards.</p>

Q: Why is Holy Cross Academy using a Curriculum Based Grading and Reporting system?

A: Holy Cross Academy is committed to creating a “learning goal-orientated student” who is motivated by a desire to improve knowledge and to develop a deeper understanding of the learning goals. Our grading and reporting system needs to reflect grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of student learning. The change to curriculum based grading is an effort to reach this goal. Here is how curriculum based grading addresses each of the four criteria.

Accurate- By basing a student’s grade solely on academic factors, the teacher creates a clear picture of what the student has learned without the influence of other factors. These other factors, such as effort and attitude, are still essential, but are not part of the student’s academic grade and are communicated separately.

Consistent- For each unit, the teacher will provide the student with a rubric that describes exactly which skills the student is expected to master. The use of rubrics establishes clear expectations for mastery up front and applies them consistently as students refer to their rubric throughout the unit and semester.

Meaningful- A meaningful grade is one that clearly communicates what learning has taken place. In a curriculum based classroom, scores are recorded by the essential standards rather than by type, such as tests or homework, making it easier to identify areas of strength and to address areas of concern for each student.

Supportive of Learning- Curriculum based grading supports learning by focusing on the material that has or has not been learned rather than on accumulating points to reach a certain total. The ability to reassess a student supports student learning by allowing a new level of learning to replace the old when a student shows improvement on an assessment.

By moving curriculum based grading and reporting to the middle school, HCA has expanded upon our ability to report what students know and are able to do toward the standard.

Q: What are rubrics and why do teachers use them?

A: A rubric is:

- A tool to assign distinct levels of knowledge and skill relative to a specific topic
- A tool that makes it easy for teachers to design and score assessments that can be used to generate both formative (informal) and summative (formal) scores
- A tool that helps the students know how their work will be evaluated before the work begins

There are many advantages to using rubrics:

- Teachers can increase the quality of their direct instruction by providing focus, emphasis, and attention to particular details as a model for students

- Students have explicit guidelines regarding teacher expectations
- Students can use rubrics as a tool to develop their abilities

Please see pages 11 and 12 for an example of a completed rubric.

Q: How will my child be assessed?

A: Each student's learning will be assessed using a variety of formative and summative assessments. These tools will include summative (formal) assessments such as traditional paper-and-pencil tests, projects, written papers, lab reports, or verbal assessments, but they may also include formative (informal) assessments such as classroom discussions or teacher observations. Essentially, everything that a student does in a curriculum based class provides the teacher with evidence of the student's learning.

Q: What can my child do to raise their grade in a curriculum based class?

A: The goal in a curriculum based class is to ensure students master the essential standards for the class, so any efforts to raise your child's grade will have the same goal. Your child should meet with the teacher during their regularly scheduled Conference Time to determine which standards need improvement. Together, they will create a plan on how to relearn the material and when to be reassessed. If your child demonstrates a higher level of mastery on the reassessment, then the grade for that standard will be increased and the student's grade will increase. Again, the focus is on improving your child's mastery of the material, so extra credit points are not used in curriculum based classrooms.

Q: What is Conference Time?

A: Conferences take place between the teacher and student. This time allows the teacher the opportunity to work with each student to specifically target their strengths and weaknesses. It also gives the student the ability to ask questions and to develop a plan for success. The teacher will offer suggestions and even direct the student to additional resources for more information and practice. Conference Time will look a bit different in K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. Your child's teacher will inform you of how they will schedule Conference Time at the beginning of the school year.

Q: What can I do to help motivate my child using the curriculum based reporting and grading system?

A: Our goal at Holy Cross Academy is to develop a **learning goal-orientated student** who is motivated by a desire to improve knowledge and to develop a deeper understanding; getting a reward or avoiding punishment is secondary. As a result, learning and motivation are more intrinsic. Students with this attitude see the value in

what is being learned, prefer more challenging tasks, display independent learning, become more success-orientated rather than failure-avoiding, and understand the connection between their effort and successful performance.

Curriculum Based grading leads to a learning goal-orientation because what students learn is focused on the descriptors in the rubrics which indicate the level of success. Students who MASTER the standards should be celebrated for the fact they have developed a deeper understanding of the learning goal. With time, students will be able to see the direct link between the Performance Descriptors and their performance.

The level at which a student feels they are capable of success strengthens with Curriculum Based grading because separate grades are given for non-academic skills, such as effort and participation. This method helps students understand the connection between effort and performance and that trying to learn results in better performance. As students realize their understanding increased because of their efforts, students are more likely to be motivated and engaged.

As a parent, you can help your child stay motivated by supporting HCA's goal of creating a learning goal-orientated student, encouraging your child to always do their best, keeping in contact with your child's teacher, recognizing the hard work your child puts into learning the individual standards, and viewing the gradebook and report card with an eye toward learning more about how and what your child learns.

Q: What about admittance to high school?

A: Many of the area high schools are already converting to the Standards Based/Curriculum Based approach to grading and reporting. The principal of the middle school, Mrs. Janet Dolan, has been in contact with the Admission Directors of the local Catholic high schools. These schools take many areas into consideration before accepting a student; report card grades and the narrative from the teacher, the student's learner qualities, and the student's standardized test scores. These schools assure Mrs. Dolan they are not only open to receiving our curriculum based report cards, but look forward to them since they give such a detailed glimpse into the student's knowledge, abilities, and work habits.

COMPONENTS OF THE CBRC

The Holy Cross Academy Report Card addresses all core and specialty subjects. In an effort to provide more detailed information, these subjects have been subdivided into “strands”. The standards (or concepts/skills) are listed under the strand.

Example of the HCA Report Card (Kindergarten level):

(subject) *Language Arts*

(strand) Reading

(standards) Recognizes grade level words
 Understands book concepts (author, illustrator, and characters)
 Use a variety of reading comprehension strategies
 Reads independently a variety of Children’s literature
 Follows print left to right, top to bottom and return to the next line

(strand) Written and Oral Communication

(standards) Forms letters correctly
 Writes with inventive and conventional spelling
 Adds drawings to descriptions to provide additional detail
 Holds writing tool correctly
 Identifies and clarifies the meaning of unknown words

(strand) Word Study

(standards) Identify upper and lower case letters
 Identify beginning sounds of pictures and objects
 Recognizes rhyming words
 Demonstrates knowledge of first letter alphabetical order

K-8 PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS

PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTOR	EXPLANATION
MASTERY	The student CONSISTENTLY demonstrates an understanding of the learning goal and applies the information, concepts, and skills at an independent level .
ACHIEVING	The student USUALLY demonstrates understanding of the learning goal and applies the information, concepts, and skills at an independent level .
DEVELOPING	The student SOMETIMES demonstrates an understanding of the learning goal by applying the necessary information, concepts, and skills. The student needs teacher support in order to meet the learning goal.
INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS	The student INFREQUENTLY demonstrates understanding of the learning goal by applying the necessary information, concepts, and skills. The student needs reteaching and extra support in order to meet the learning goal.

* An asterisk, next to the **MASTERY** Performance Descriptor, will be used when a student has demonstrated understanding of concepts/skills above their grade level.

K-5 LEARNER QUALITIES (Self-Directed Learner and Quality Producer, Respectful Citizen, Cooperative Learner) will be graded with an *O=Outstanding, S=Satisfactory, &/or NI=Needs Improvement*

6-8 LEARNER QUALITIES

Participation-Student contributes ideas in small and large group discussions and puts forth a high degree of effort.

Cooperation-Student demonstrates respect toward the teacher, classmates and self; encourages peers, follows classroom rules and procedures; and accepts responsibility for own behavior.

Assignments-Student completes work on time, is prepared for class, and follows the directions of the assignment.

*The middle school Learner Qualities will be graded with *Mastery, Achieving, Developing, &/or Insufficient Progress*.

WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

Developing and maintaining curriculum based grading and reporting is a continually evolving process. We have the following system in place to continually monitor and update CBG at all of HCA campuses.

- HCA faculty members will engage in structured, on-going, and targeted professional learning.
- Evaluate and update curriculum based report cards and gradebooks annually.
- Frequently evaluate and update our process for receiving feedback from all stakeholders.
- Work closely with the admission directors of area Catholic high schools.

WHERE YOU CAN LOOK FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Five Obstacles to Grading Reform by: Thomas R. Guskey

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov11/vol69/num03/Five-Obstacles-to-Grading-Reform.aspx>

Grades That Show What Students Know by: Robert Marzano and Tammy Heflebower

<https://www.ocps.net/lc/southwest/mso/parents/Documents/Grades%20That%20Show%20What%20Students%20Know.pdf>

A Better Grading System: Standards-Based, Student-Centered Assessment

by: Jeanetta Jones Miller

<http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/EJ/1031-sep2013/EJ1031Better.pdf>

Letter Grades Deserve an 'F' by: Jessica Lahey

<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/03/letter-grades-deserve-an-f/28437>

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Timeline Project First grade

	Mastery	Achieving	Developing	Insufficient Progress
Interprets information presented in picture timelines	Student can thoroughly and accurately describe the events on the timeline without repeatedly referring to it and can quickly determine which of two events occurred first.	Student can accurately describe some of the events on the timeline without referring to it and can quickly determine which of two events occurred first.	Student can describe any event on the timeline if allowed to refer to it and can determine which of the two events occurred first.	Student cannot use the timeline effectively to describe events or to compare events.
Demonstrates effective oral communication	Student gives a thorough and accurate explanation of their timeline and can effectively respond to teacher prompted questions about their project	Student gives an accurate explanation of their timeline and can effectively respond to most teacher prompted questions about their project	Student gives an incomplete explanation of their timeline and can sometimes effectively respond to teacher prompted questions about their project	Student gives an incomplete explanation of their timeline and cannot effectively respond to teacher prompted questions about their project
Spells grade level words accurately and uses correct capitalization	Student consistently demonstrates the use, and correct spelling, of a precise vocabulary. Capitalization is accurate.	Student consistently demonstrates the use of grade level spelling and capitalization	Student inconsistently demonstrates the use of grade level spelling and capitalization	Student does not demonstrate the use of grade level spelling and capitalization

<u>LEARNER QUALITIES:</u> Produces work that is neat and organized	Information on the timeline is displayed in a detailed, neat manner that is well organized and is easy to view.	Information on the timeline is displayed very neatly, is organized well and is easy to view	Information on the timeline is inconsistently neat and organized, and may or may not be easy to view	Information on the timeline is not neat and organized
Shows effort	The timeline contained more than 5 events.	The timeline contained 5 events.	The timeline contained 3-4 events.	The timeline contained less than 3 events.
Follows directions	–	All directions were followed	Most directions were followed	Some directions were followed
Completes and returns homework on time	–	Projected returned by due date	Project returned 1 day late	Project returned more than 1 day late