

THURSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL
Progress Reports Guide

In an effort to make Thurston’s quarterly progress reports more useful to parents, we have created this three-part guide. The first part provides an overview of the purpose and the process, the second part includes the answers to a number of frequently asked questions (FAQs), and the third part lists all the possible pre-written comments that teachers may use.

Part I: Overview

Progress reports are intended to provide students and their parents with a snapshot of the student’s performance at mid-term. Progress reports are not as precisely calculated as grades, but the narrative descriptors can help students and parents identify areas of strength and weakness so that steps can be taken to maintain or improve performance before the end of the term.

When entering progress reports in our computer system, teachers include 1) an “achievement” comment and 2) either two additional standard comments OR an individualized “write in” comment for each student. The achievement comment provides an overall sense of the student’s performance. Additional comments are then used to offer more detailed explanation. A complete listing of standard comments is attached.

Arts teachers who teach semester-long (half-year) courses (physical education, band, chorus, general music, orchestra, reading, culinary arts) issue their progress reports at least once during the semester. Grades for these classes are sent home with trimester 2 progress reports.

Part II: FAQs

The following questions and answers should help you navigate and respond to you child’s progress reports.

1. How should I interpret the achievement comments? Are they the same as grades?

While some teachers use rough grade equivalents to determine achievement comments, others take a more holistic approach. The following chart can help you get a sense of how to interpret the achievement comments.

| COMMENT | EXPLANATION |
|---|--|
| excellent achievement | <i>Student is exceeding class expectations.</i> Homework is consistently completed on time and of high quality, AND/OR performance on tests and other assessments has consistently earned “A” range grades, AND/OR class participation is excellent. |
| good achievement | <i>Student is meeting class expectations.</i> Homework is consistently completed, although quality and timeliness may have room for improvement, AND/OR performance on tests and other assessments has earned primarily “B” range grades, AND/OR class participation is solid. |
| fair achievement | <i>Student is meeting some but not all class expectations.</i> Homework is turned in but tends to be late, incomplete or of poor quality, AND/OR performance on tests and other assessments has earned primarily “B-“ or “C” range grades, AND/OR class participation is inconsistent. |
| unsatisfactory achievement/ in danger of failing | <i>Student is not meeting class expectations.</i> Homework is missing, late, or poor quality, AND/OR performance on some tests and assessments has earned “C-“ or “D” or lower grades, AND/OR class participation is inconsistent, AND/OR poor class behavior is impacting performance. |

2. What should I do if my child receives a comment that he doesn't understand? (For example, he receives the comment "needs to spend more time on homework," but he isn't sure why.)
Please encourage your child to approach his or her teacher at an appropriate time (before school, after class or during X-Block) to discuss the comment. Then, make a follow-up call or send an email to the teacher directly.
3. What should I do if a comment is either missing or incorrect?
Please contact your child's teacher directly if an error needs to be corrected.
4. I am concerned about my child's overall academic performance—she doesn't seem to be living up to her potential. What steps can I take to help her? What can the school do?
First, have a conversation with your child about what her goals are. Unless she wants to improve, it will be very hard for anyone to help her. Next, make sure she has a good work space and a good work routine at home, and talk with her about ways you can help her make a habit out of completing her work. Finally, contact your child's team leader about your concern. He or she can work with the team to identify specific areas of concern and provide additional in-school support.
5. My child seems to be working very hard but his progress report includes "fair" and "unsatisfactory" achievement comments in several classes. I am afraid he will get frustrated and discouraged.
Contact your child's guidance counselor. The counselor can talk with you in more depth about what you are seeing at home, and give you some good advice about next steps.
6. Based on her progress report, I think my child might be in the wrong math level.
Talk with your child about your concern and the idea of a change. If you are in agreement that a level change would be positive, then contact your child's math teacher to discuss the possibility. Remember that a level change is a schedule change, so your child should be prepared to switch at least two of her classes.
7. My child does not seem to have much homework, but he received "excellent" achievement comments. I am afraid he isn't being appropriately challenged.
Talk with your child about his experience of school so far. If he feels the work is too easy in a particular class or in several classes, contact the specific teacher or the team leader.
8. I lost the copy of my child's progress report that needs to be signed and returned to school.
You can send a hand-written note to school indicating that you have seen and reviewed you child's report. If you would like a new copy, please contact the main office (x2336).
9. My former spouse and I would both like to receive copies of my child's progress reports and report cards, but currently only one is sent home.
Contact Thurston's main office (x2336) to make sure we have both addresses in our student database.
10. My child often has questions about her homework that I am not sure how to answer.
Talk with your child about visiting teachers during X-Block, and contact the specific teacher or the team leader for additional support.

Part III: **PROGRESS REPORT COMMENTS**

The following list includes all possible pre-written comments that teachers may include on progress reports. Teachers are limited to three standard comments per student. In addition, a teacher can choose to write in one individualized comment per student.

Conduct

01. excellent attitude
02. positive attitude
03. excellent conduct
04. good conduct
05. pleasure to have in class
06. shows positive leadership
07. helpful to others
08. demonstrates responsibility
09. poor attitude
10. poor conduct
11. disruptive behavior in class
12. behavior needs improvement
13. too talkative in class
14. needs to show respect for school property
15. socializing inhibits classwork
16. needs to be on time for class
17. needs to follow class rules
18. does not accept constructive criticism

Effort

19. excellent effort
20. good effort
21. shows improvement
22. shows enthusiasm for subject
23. strong work habits
24. conscientious worker
25. self starter
26. more effort needed
27. did not seek help
28. inconsistent effort/quality of work
29. capable of better work
30. needs extra help
31. did not take opportunity to improve grade
32. did not make up work
33. did not make up work when absent

Achievement

37. good work
38. steady improvement and growth
39. demonstrates creativity
40. performing above grade level
43. meets minimal course requirements
44. low quiz/test scores
45. missing quiz/test scores
46. weaknesses in basic skills
47. absences are affecting grade
48. performing below grade level

Participation

49. works well with others
50. good listening skills
51. follows directions well
52. stays on task
53. attentive, uses time wisely
54. works well independently
55. active class participation
56. thoughtful contributor to class discussion
57. needs to improve note-taking
58. should improve listening skills
59. does not follow directions well
60. distracted, inattentive/needs to be redirected often
61. difficulty working cooperatively with peers
62. should participate more

Preparedness

63. comes to class prepared
64. needs to come to class prepared
65. lacks organization
66. does not bring necessary materials
67. does not use assignment book effectively

Homework

68. assignments thoughtfully completed
69. consistently completes homework
70. needs to spend more time on homework
71. homework missing, incomplete or late
72. major assignments/projects missing, incomplete or late
73. poor study habits
74. study habits need improvement

Subject

75. graded on individual achievement
76. uses foreign language outside classroom
77. good accent in target language
78. displays good sportsmanship
79. excused for medical reasons
80. good written work
81. good quality lab work
82. good problem solving skills
83. difficulty in expressing ideas
84. difficulty comprehending subject matter
85. writing not detailed/complete
86. needs to work on accent in target language
87. displays poor sportsmanship
88. does not make good use of learning center time
89. journal work not completed
90. journal work needs improvement
91. needs to proofread work carefully
92. weak written work
93. lab work needs improvement
94. problem-solving skills need improvement
95. needs to show all steps and work
96. computational skills need improvement
97. work needs to be neat and legible