New written reports for primary and secondary school students

NSW Public Schools - Leading the way
A new way of reporting

By the end of 2006, all schools will provide parents with written reports that meet NSW Government requirements and respond both to parent feedback and academic research.

Parents will receive two written reports each year. The reports will give you a clearer picture of your child’s achievements. They will help you understand how your child is progressing and how we can support your child’s future learning.

The new written reports will build on current quality practice in schools and will be more consistent for students and their families. Written reports are just one way that schools use to communicate with parents about how their child is going at school.

This brochure will give you a broad overview of the elements of the new reports and a better understanding of A to E grading. If you have more questions, you should contact your school or visit the Department’s website www.decd.nsw.edu.au

Your child’s new reports will:

- Be written in plain language.
- Provide information about your child’s learning in each subject.
- Include teacher comments that identify areas of strength and areas for further development in each subject.
- Provide you with a snapshot of your child’s achievements with an A to E grade.
- Provide information about your child’s social development and commitment to learning.

What A to E means

The Board of Studies has developed the following descriptions of achievement for use by all NSW schools.

A - Outstanding achievement

The Board of Studies develops statewide curriculum standards for all government and non-government schools in New South Wales. These determine what students are required to learn. The Board has also developed the A to E descriptions of achievement. These will be used to describe how well a student has achieved in each subject over the past semester (two terms). Achievement standards will be applied consistently across the state.

C means that your child is ‘on track’ in relation to what he or she is expected to learn. Other grades will indicate whether your child is doing better than expected or needs more help.

The Board of Studies has developed the following descriptions of achievement for use by all NSW schools.

A - Outstanding achievement

The student has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the content and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition, the student has achieved a very high level of competence in the processes and skills and can apply these skills to new situations.

B - High achievement

The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content and a high level of competence in the processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills to most situations.

C - Sound achievement

The student has a sound knowledge and understanding of the main areas of content and has achieved an adequate level of competence in the processes and skills.

D - Basic achievement

The student has a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a basic level of competence in the processes and skills.

E - Limited achievement

The student has an elementary knowledge and understanding in few areas of the content and has achieved very limited competence in some of the processes and skills.
The introduction of A to E grading is probably the most significant change that you'll notice about the new reports, especially for primary aged children.

These new grades are different from the grades you might remember from your school years. The new A to E grades don’t rank your child in his or her class. Rather, the grades indicate whether your child is ‘on track’, and learning what is expected, doing better than expected or needs more help. For example, a grade of C indicates that your child is making sound progress in relation to what he or she was expected to learn over the last semester – your child is ‘on track’.

Kindergarten students, students with learning difficulties and students who are learning English for the first time will receive a written report but without the A to E grades.

Why use the A to E grades?

- Schools currently use some form of a scale when reporting to parents, but there is no consistency across schools.
- The A to E scale will be used by all schools and provide a consistent language for reporting to parents across the state.
- Teachers will make a professional judgement, using the grade descriptions, about how well each student has learned what he or she was expected to learn in the past semester (two terms).

What do D and E mean?

- A grade of D or E indicates that, in relation to what he or she was expected to learn, the student has demonstrated only basic or limited achievement.
- The student has learnt some things but not enough to be ‘on track’ in relation to syllabus standards.
- The grade of D or E is an alert to the student and parents that more needs to be done to keep the student ‘on track’.

Will reporting be the same across all schools?

- This new approach to reporting means that all reports will have common elements, as described over the page.
- All schools will use A to E grades and along with other common elements this will mean that there will be more consistency in reporting across schools in New South Wales.

A to E grades are part of the picture

While A to E grades are an important indicator of your child’s progress at school they are only part of the picture.

Student reports will also include information on your child’s level of effort and teacher comments on progress in each subject. For example, your child may have received a D in a particular subject but the report will also tell you about the effort that he or she has made.

This mix of information will help you discuss with your child and his or her teacher how to provide encouragement and improve progress.

If you have a concern about your child’s progress or behaviour, or you just want to have a general discussion about your child, you don’t have to wait until you receive a written report.

Schools provide opportunities for parents to talk with teachers or the Principal. As well, you can always call the school to make a time for a special meeting. It’s best to ring the school in advance to schedule a mutually convenient time.

There is no set number or spread of A to E grades that a teacher or school has to use.
Common elements of the new reports

All reports will have common elements that will lead to more consistency in reporting across schools.

The reports will include:

1. An overall grade for each subject, such as English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>outstanding achievement</td>
<td>high achievement</td>
<td>sound achievement</td>
<td>basic achievement</td>
<td>limited achievement</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Achievement in components or parts of a subject, for example English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talking and listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. A comment from your child’s teacher on each subject studied, for example English.

Georgia has successfully learnt to use her knowledge and skills to read many types of books and texts. She contributes to class discussion with thoughtful questions and answers. She has made a good start with oral presentations. More time spent in the planning stage will greatly improve her final delivery. Georgia and I have discussed what she needs to focus on next. She is writing very well on a range of topics and now needs to focus on spelling, grammar and punctuation, particularly the use of commas.

In Year 6, Georgia will be helped with her editing strategies and use of dictionaries to improve her written work.

4. Information about other school activities. Schools will decide which activities to include.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Involved</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Involved</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debating</td>
<td></td>
<td>Athletics carnival</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School soccer team</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School band</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier’s reading challenge</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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5. Information about social development and commitment to learning. Schools will decide which aspects to include.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social development</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works cooperatively</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respects school rules</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates self control</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment to learning and effort</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completes tasks in class</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organises materials</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asks for help when needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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A=Always  U=Usually  S=Sometimes  R=Rarely
You can get further information about the new A to E graded reports from your local school or see www.dec.nsw.edu.au

If you need more information contact your principal. If you need an interpreter to assist you please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on telephone number 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. The interpreter will call the principal and will stay on the line to assist you with your conversation. You will not be charged for this service.