

## Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Office of the Bishop  
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March 25, 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Office of Catholic Schools will be giving support and assistance to all schools in the 2015-2016 academic year with the implementation of a revised diocesan standards based student interim and progress reports. Standards based grading will continue to be used by all elementary schools in the Diocese of Columbus in grades K-8 with the optional addition of subject level letter grades 6-8. To support consistent grading practices among teachers, new progress code descriptions have been developed by elementary school principals and the Office of Catholic Schools staff and will be used for reporting purposes.

Top researchers in education are placing an important focus on the significance of good grading practices that are accurate, meaningful, consistent, and supportive of student learning. Educational researchers Thomas Guskey and Robert Marzano both agree that grading is synonymous with communication. When used correctly, grades provide vital information to students, parents, and other interested persons that enhance both teaching and learning. Grading helps identify what learning standards have been attained, where additional work is needed, and can serve as a basis for school improvement efforts. The emphasis is on academic achievement. Non-academic skills such as effort and behavior are important but reported separately. The intent is to present information regarding a student's progress so that intervention or enrichment strategies can be applied to help each child learn (advanced, proficient, struggling, and special needs) and to honor the dignity of each student as a child of God.

Additionally, our focus should be placed on both the student's moral and intellectual excellence. By fully implementing a standard based reporting system, accurate information about student performance can be communicated by teachers to parents. Children and their learning are too complex to be reduced to a simple letter grade. This reporting system will be a fuller indication of academic progress than other currently used grading systems. The progress codes indicate a child's progress toward achieving specific grade level standards as identified by the Ohio Department of Education in conjunction with the Diocesan Course of Study.

More information will be shared with you by your elementary school principal before the 2015-2016 school year. You can refer to the Office of Catholic Schools web page under the parent tab to learn more about standards based grading and the student progress report. Thank you for your continued support of Catholic education, one of the most important ministries of the Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Frederick F. Campbell, D.D., Ph.D.  
Bishop of Columbus



Joseph A. Brettnacher, Ph.D.  
Episcopal Moderator of Catholic Education & Superintendent of Schools

cc: Pastors and Elementary Principals

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