



# UCS Parent Guide for Grading and Performance Monitoring

2021-2022

# Purpose

- The purpose of this parent guide is to strengthen your understanding of HOW and WHY we grade the way we do at UCS. We have broken away from traditional grading to embrace the effective and research-based approach of competency-based grading, which is already showing promising impact on student achievement.
- Therefore, we need our parents to understand our grading system so that you can speak the same language about grading at home as we do at school. The more this language becomes *common* among all of us, the more we can all support our Trailblazers in their pursuit of academic excellence.

# Understanding UCS Grading Practices

UCS is a competency-based assessment school. This means that students are graded and assessed on the academic standards in their courses, which includes:

- Multiple opportunities to demonstrate understanding to the teacher;
- Flexibility in how a student demonstrates understanding of a standard, such as through answering multiple choice questions, written responses, conversations, drawings, videos, and more.
- Allowing students to move at their own pace in learning by choosing how and when they feel they understand the material to the teacher, which allows them to move on even if other students are not (or to provide the student more time and attention to learn at a more individualized pace).

A competency-based system can also take into account other important skills, such as social-emotional skills (self-awareness, self-management, decision-making, etc.) and important life “soft skills” (teamwork, communication, leadership, etc.). We will expand our work in this area over the next several years as we refine and polish our work on the academic side of our grading practices.

# UCS Grading Scale

Teachers use the following 1-4 scale to assess student work. You should see these scores on work coming home with students, and will see these scores displayed in PowerSchool.

Beside each score is the general description of what the student can and/or cannot do at a certain point in time when a teacher checks for understanding.

The beauty of a competency-based system is that a student can continue to move higher on the scale with more time, attention, practice, and remediation to improve understanding and overall performance.

A student's score on a standard is fluid as the teacher works the entire school year on ensuring each student can be as proficient on as many standards as possible.

Scaled Score	Description of Student Ability
4.0 Mastery	The student demonstrates mastery of the content by being able to explain/teach others, by being able to apply to new contexts, etc.
3.5	With help, students can explain/teach others and/or is able to apply understanding of the standard to new contexts, etc.
3.0 Proficient	The student can successfully demonstrate the knowledge and skills of the standard independently.
2.5	The student is approaching independence of demonstrating the knowledge and skills of the standard, but may still require help or may be incorrect in some knowledge and/or skills.
2.0 Approaching Proficiency	With help, the student can demonstrate knowledge and skills of the standard.
1.5	With help, the student can demonstrate some success with the knowledge and skills of the standard.
1.0 Below Proficiency	Even with help, the student cannot successfully demonstrate the knowledge and skills of the standard.

# Understanding the Score

Scaled Score	Percent Proficient
4.00 (Mastery)	100
3.50	90
3.00 (Proficient)	80
2.50	70
2.00 (Approaching Proficiency)	60
1.50	50
1.00 (Below Proficiency)	40

- The majority of the scores you will see as a parent will be in a 1-4 format. However, we translate this score to reflect an overall percentage of standards that a student has mastered.
- The table to the left displays this year's translation. The minimum target for all students is a 3.0. To achieve a 3.0 a student must be able to successfully demonstrate the requirements of a particular standard.
- For students who want to demonstrate the highest level of mastery, they have opportunities to demonstrate this knowledge by applying their understanding of the standard to new contexts, which can earn them a 3.5 or 4.0.
- The higher a student scores on the 1-4 range on each standard, the higher his/her overall level of proficiency is, which results in a higher overall score.

# What are the benefits of a competency-based system?

**Clarity of Learning.** With a clear scale that *describes* what a student can or cannot do when assessed, everyone can be on the same page -- teacher, student, and parent. We can all use the same language of a 2.0 and understand that a student still needs help in order to be successful; and we can all understand that when we see a 3.0 that the student is successful independently. Gone is the confusion or misunderstanding of what a particular number may mean. Instead, the focus is *on the learning* and what needs to be done to increase student proficiency.

**Student Ownership.** Since grading is easier to understand, students can OWN their learning by setting goals, tracking their growth and progress, know what standards they need to work on more and where they are strong, and more. This can empower students to be more self-directed, moving at individual paces and learning in customized approaches instead of having to stay on pace with a whole group of 20-30 students. As a student grows up with this approach, he/she will be able to take on lots of advanced learning opportunities because of the level of independence and confidence that has been built. The sky's the limit!

All of this sounds great... but what level must my student be scored at in order to pass?

Good question! The below is taken from our Student Handbook (which can be easily located on the UCS website).

*“In order for a student to be eligible for promotion to the next grade level, students must demonstrate proficiency of at least 60% of the standards in each core academic course (English/reading, math, science, and social studies) **and** must benchmark (score on-grade level) in reading and mathematics.”*

Therefore, a student's 1-4 scores must average together to at least reflect a proficiency percentage of 60% overall in a class in order to be eligible for promotion. UCS will report this in PowerSchool so that parents can see this progress throughout the year.

# Great! So what else do I need to know about grading as a parent?

- **Communicate with teachers.** The more we can use the same language with grading, the more in sync we can be in supporting students and growing their overall level of proficiency. Make sure you understand the difference in scores on the 1-4 scale and what each level reflects in terms of what your student(s) can/cannot do at a particular point in time.
- **Grades are fluid.** This means that a student's overall score on a standard will likely change over time as the teacher builds understanding. A student may likely start at a Level 1 or 2 and remain there for awhile until he/she can fully demonstrate the standard. That is okay! Our grades are not "once and done" to allow students more time and space to truly learn what is expected, even if it takes a whole semester (for a secondary student) or a whole year (for an elementary student).
- **Some standards are BIG.** You may hear from some teachers that they are working on *part* of a standard instead of a full standard because there are so many skills and content knowledge packed in them. Because of this, a student may not have the opportunity to demonstrate a full level of proficiency at a Level 3 until later on when all of these pieces have been taught. Again, that is okay! The student's score can (and likely will!) go up once these pieces together and form the full puzzle.





Now that you are up to speed on grading at UCS, let's take a look at how you can monitor your students' academic progress through the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

# Background Information

*All students brought home PowerSchool Parent Portal account information on 9/9 to guide you in creating your account and linking your child(ren) to your account. If you did not receive this from your student, please reach out to your child(ren)'s homeroom teacher and we will make sure to get this to you.*

*The next few slides are a general orientation to what you will see once you establish your account. We encourage parents to check on their child(ren)'s progress **MULTIPLE** times a week. Teachers update grades weekly. As our partner in education, make sure you stay in the loop on academic performance to ensure the highest level of possible success for your child(ren)!*

# Step 1

- Make sure you have the parent letter handy and visit the web address listed on the letter.
- Your web page should look like the image to the right.
- You will click on “Create Account” to establish your parent account and link your students.

UNIVERSITY  
CHARTER SCHOOL  
**UCS**

PowerSchool SIS

## Parent Sign In

Sign In Create Account

Username

Password

[Forgot Username or Password?](#)

[Sign In](#)

## Student Sign In

Students - Click the button to sign in. You will be redirected to the Student sign in page.

[Student Sign In](#)

## Step 2

- Enter your personal information on the Create Account screen (as shown to the right).
- Make sure to use an email address that you can check regularly so that you stay in the loop regarding your students' performance.
- **You will receive a verification email to this account after you have established your account.**



 PowerSchool SIS

### Create Parent Account

#### Parent Account Details

First Name	<input type="text"/>	
Last Name	<input type="text"/>	
Email	<input type="text"/>	
Re-enter Email	<input type="text"/>	
Desired Username	<input type="text"/>	
Password	<input type="password"/>	<input type="password"/>
Re-enter Password	<input type="password"/>	

Password must:

- Be at least 8 characters long
- Contain at least one uppercase and one lowercase letter
- Contain at least one letter and one number
- Contain at least one special character

## Step 3

- Enter each of your children's information into the boxes provided.
- If you have multiple students attending UCS, each student has a unique form letter with a specific Access ID and Access Password needed for you to link them to your account.
- Please note that Pre-K and Kindergarten students do not receive grades through PowerSchool.
- When you have finished entering all of your students' information, click the blue "Enter" button at the bottom of the screen. This will then send the verification email mentioned. Access your email inbox, open this email, and click on the verification link to finalize your account setup.

### Link Students to Account

Enter the Access ID, Access Password, and Relationship for each student you wish to add to your Parent Account

1

Student Name

Access ID

Access Password

Relationship

-- Choose



2

Student Name

Access ID

Access Password

Relationship

-- Choose



3

Student Name

Access ID

Access Password

Relationship

-- Choose



# Navigating the Portal

If you have multiple children, their names will be displayed here beside each other where you can click to see grades and attendance for each one individually.

PowerSchool SIS

Easton Emerson

Navigation

- Grades and Attendance
- Grade History
- Standards Based Report Card
- Course Based Report Card
- Student Transcript
- Attendance History
- Email Notification
- Teacher Comments
- School Bulletin
- Class Registration
- My Schedule
- School Information
- Account Preferences

Grades and Attendance Standards Gra

Exp	H	Ei	PI	M	S
HRE(M-F)					
1(M-T,H-F)					
2(M-T,H-F)					
E1(M-F)					
E2(M-F)					
E3(M-F)					
E4(M-F)					
E5(M-T,H-F)					
E6(M-T,H-F)					

- Now that you are in your portal, you will notice a Navigation column on the very right. Some of these selections will allow you to view important information regarding your student.

The default screen is called Grades and Attendance and is a quick view of all classes/subjects with the current overall level of proficiency reported. You will see a 1-4 score **and** a percent proficient score for each course/subject.

You can click on “Teacher Comments” to see any particular comments/notes from a teacher and can easily email teachers from this area of PowerSchool.

Navigation

Grades and Attendance

Grade History

Standards Based Report Card

Course Based Report Card

Student Transcript

Attendance History

Email Notification

Teacher Comments

School Bulletin

Class Registration

My Schedule

School Information

Account Preferences

Grades and Attendance:

Grades and Attendance Standards Gra

Exp	
HRE(M-F)	H
1(M-T,H-F)	Ei
2(M-T,H-F)	PI
E1(M-F)	Ei
E2(M-F)	M
E3(M-F)	PI
E4(M-F)	S
E5(M-T,H-F)	S
E6(M-T,H-F)	S

By clicking here, you will see ALL of the standards your student will learn this year along with the current level of proficiency for each one that has been scored. This is a comprehensive look at all classes in alignment with academic standards.

*The End*

There will be much more for us to learn together as we become more experienced with using PowerSchool. Hopefully this guidance will start you off on the right path to staying in the loop with your students' grades.

You will be able to view detailed attendance information in the coming weeks as the setup of this portion of PowerSchool continues.

THANK YOU!