



# Proficiency-Based Transcript

DESIGN FEATURES + CONSIDERATIONS

## Design Features

### General Design Recommendations

—Clear visual separation of critical elements—do not clump information together.

—Use standard letter-size paper—colleges often copy/scan and distribute internally, and letter-sized paper makes it easier.

### School Profile (one or two pages max)

Describe the academic program clearly and concisely:

1. Statement on the school's approach to pedagogy, learning standards, and curricular rigor.
2. Description of the purpose of proficiency-based instruction.
3. Description of how the curriculum works and how challenging it is (include link to online program of studies and other relevant documents, if applicable).
4. Description of the grading system (include link to more detailed online description, if needed or applicable).
5. Description of graduation requirements and how proficiency is determined (include link to more detailed online description, if needed or applicable).
6. Critical school data: graduation rates, college-going rates, college-persistence rates.
7. Colleges and universities where graduates have matriculated or been accepted in the past three or five years.
8. The percentages of students who have been accepted to and who have matriculated into two- and four-year collegiate programs in the past three or five years (reported as a rolling average).
9. Description of "habits of work" grading and proficiency (if applicable).
10. Student demographic information with subgroup distributions.



### **Class Profile (one page max)**

Describe the achievement of the graduating class—the distribution of grades and/or accomplishments—to provide a contextual framework for understanding individual student achievement.

1. Percentage of students meeting standards by content areas and cross-curricular skills.
2. Median proficiency attainment levels by content areas and cross-curricular skills.
3. Percentage/number of students pursuing and completing honors options/challenges.
4. Percentage/number of students attaining honors in each of the three honor levels: cum laude, magna, summa
5. Percentage/number of students completing extended learning opportunities (dual-enrollment, internships, etc.).
6. Percentage/number of students completing AP and IB courses.
7. Standardized-test scores for the class relative to state/national averages.

### **Student Narrative (optional)**

In addition to the formal transcript and school and class profiles, schools may elect to provide a descriptive narrative of students and their individual accomplishments. If a student narrative is provided, it should (1) be brief, (2) be written by teachers or other adults knowledgeable about the student, and (3) focus on academic accomplishments, unique learning attributes, and other information that will help college admissions determine what kind of learner the student is.

### **Student Transcript Features (one or two pages max)**

#### **Courses**

Course names, as they appear on the transcript, should be descriptive—in term of both content area and level of academic challenge/rigor. Abbreviations should be avoided. Course titles should be independently recognizable and understandable, and an easy-to-understand legend, key, or glossary should be included if abbreviations or multiple



course levels are used. In heterogeneous courses, individual achievement—accelerated attainment of standards, completion of an honors option—should be described.

### **Alternative Learning Achievements**

Additional learning achievements—such as the completion of a dual-enrollment course, credit-bearing internship, or service-learning requirement—should be reported on the transcript and clearly described, especially if students are graded and earn credit or satisfy graduation requirements.

### **Grading System**

The grading system, particularly the distinctions between grades and attainment levels, should be clearly and succinctly explained on the transcript. The description should also address how grades are determined. The grading system should be based on a recognizable scale, such as a 4.0 scale, to facilitate understanding. If space is an issue, include a link to a more detailed online description of the grading system. The Great Schools Partnership strongly recommends that schools adopt a proficiency-based grading system that is based on a 4.0 scale.

### **GPA**

The GPA is aligned to the proficiency-based scale.

### **Class Rank, Honors, Awards, Academic Distinctions**

Transcripts should report academic honors and notable academic awards and distinctions. While some schools or scholarship programs may require traditional class ranking, the Great Schools Partnership strongly recommends that schools adopt a Latin honors system that reports three levels of achievement: *Summa Cum Laude*, *Magna Cum Laude*, and *Cum Laude*.

### **Credits or Graduation Requirements**

Clearly indicate.

### **Honors Options**

Achievement of honors options and other advanced coursework in heterogeneously grouped courses should be clearly indicated and described.



### Habits of Work

If a school uses “habits or work” (or HOW) standards and grades, the system should be described in the school profile. Schools may or may not report HOW grades on the transcript.

### Proposed Course Achievement Reporting Model

When traditionally structured schools move to proficiency-based systems, their transcripts will look relatively familiar to college admissions professionals. The following conceptual transcript design—for discussion purposes—is for schools that use:

- Proficiency-based teaching, assessment, grading, and reporting.
- Heterogeneously grouped courses without tiered academic tracks.
- Multiple pathways in which students can achieve learning standards and satisfy graduation requirements outside of traditional academic courses.
- More flexible approaches to time in which students can take shorter or longer periods of time to achieve standards.

Experience	Description	Grade	Credit	Duration	Attainment	Enrichment
Course	English 10	3.5	1.00	Year	Accelerated	Honors
Course	English 11	3.0	1.00	Year	Meets	Independent
Internship	Local Newspaper	4.0	.50	Semester	Exceeds	

**Experience:** Indicates the type of learning experience students completed (e.g., academic course, dual-enrollment course, independent study, internship, apprenticeship, etc.). A key should be included to describe in more detail what the short-hand terms, such as *Course* or *Internship*, specifically mean. For example:

- Course
- Dual enrollment
- Independent
- Internship
- Apprenticeship



**Description:** Course tile or brief description of the learning experience. A key to all terms should be included.

**Grade:** Final grade achieved. A key describing the grading system should be included.

**Credit:** Graduation credits earned.

**Duration:** General length of the learning experience. A key to all terms should be included, if necessary. For example:

- Year
- Semester
- Trimester
- Summer (session)
- Winter (session)

**Attainment:** Indicates when or to what degree students have achieved learning standards in a course or other learning experience. For example, students may achieve standards in an accelerated fashion (Accelerated, Highly Accelerated) or they may exceed standards at multiple levels (Exceeded, Highly Exceeded). Only positive or advanced achievement should be represented (i.e., a blank space will indicate that students met standards on time, over a longer period of time, or with additional support). A key to all terms should be included. For example:

- Accelerated
- Highly accelerated
- Meets
- Exceeds
- Highly Exceeds

**Enrichment:** Indicates when students have elected to pursue more challenging standards, coursework, or learning within the context of the learning experience. A key to all terms should be included. For example:

- Honors (option)
- Independent (study)
- Online (learning experience)
- Service (learning experience)
- Capstone (project)