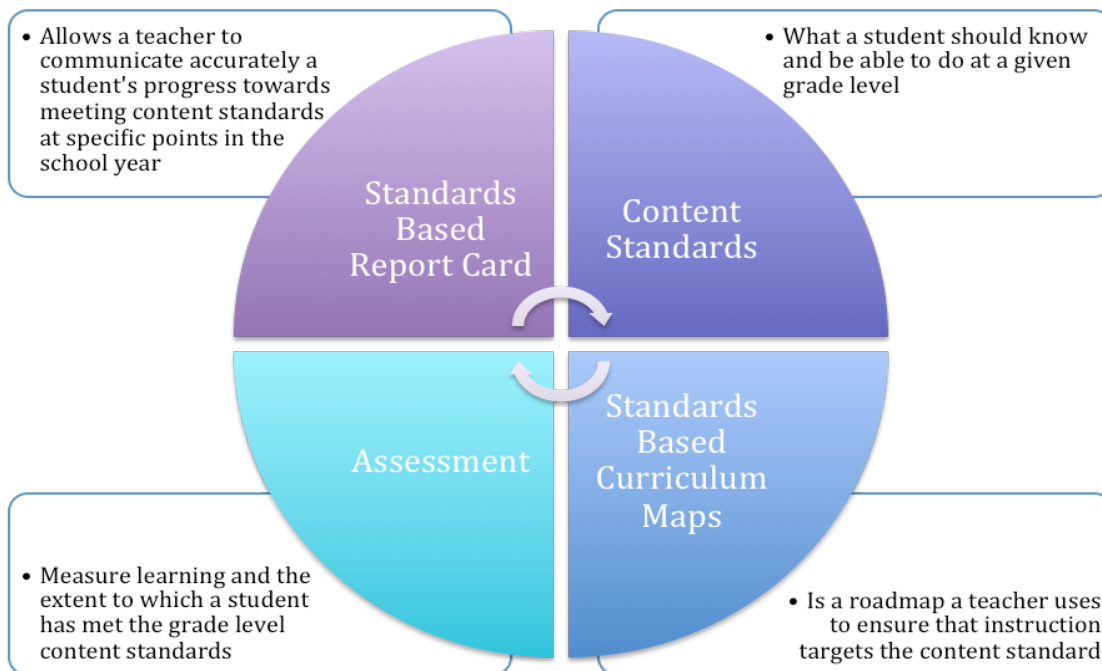


Standards-Based Learning and Reporting Guide

As we continue to improve teaching and learning for all students, we know that parents and families are our most valuable partner. This is especially true with the newly adopted, more rigorous standards that shift what every child should know and be able to do in each subject area and grade level. The Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics set high expectations for students, staff, and schools. Achieving these career and college ready standards requires continuous progress monitoring and providing targeted support as needed. Furthermore, the learning standards in the other subject areas are also shifting to emphasize student-centered and inquiry-based learning. Like teachers, parents need accurate and meaningful information -- particularly information about student strengths and challenges in performing to high expectations -- to better understand and support student learning.

The standards based report card is helpful in many ways. First, it clarifies and reinforces consistent, high expectations for student learning across all schools, grades, and teachers. Second, the report card helps teachers, students, and families focus on the standards, learning behaviors, effort and concepts throughout the school year. Finally, and most importantly, the new report card provides more detailed feedback on progress towards meeting standards throughout the school year so students, families, and teachers can work together to set meaningful goals for improvement. Information on which big ideas and concepts each child has learned and what work is still needed for success in the next grade level helps ensure that your child receives additional support, at home and school, when needed.

There are four essential components of a standards-based teaching, learning, assessment, and reporting system:



Goals of Standards-Based Report Cards

1. Clarify and reinforce consistent, high expectations for all students and schools.
2. Help teachers, students, and families focus on the standards throughout the school year.
3. Provide more detailed feedback on progress towards meeting standards throughout the school year so students, families, and teachers can work together to set meaningful goals for improvement.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is standards-based reporting?

A standards-based grade reporting system is designed to inform parents about their child's progress towards achieving specific learning standards by the end of the school year. The standards establish high and challenging performance expectations for all students. They describe what students should know and be able to do, and serve as the basis for the school's curriculum, instruction, and assessment model.

What is the purpose of the standards-based report card?

The report card was changed to provide more information to parents about *student progress* on the California academic standards. The purpose of the standards-based report card is to provide feedback that is more detailed to parents about their child's yearlong progress towards specific content indicators at each grade level. This clear and detailed information also helps build consistency between teachers and schools. Using the report card, parents and students understand more clearly what is expected at each grade level. With this knowledge, parents are better able to guide and support their children, and help them be successful in a challenging academic program.

How are standards-based report cards different from traditional report cards?

On many traditional report cards, students receive one grade for reading, one for math, one for science and so on. On a standards-based report card, each of these subject areas is divided into a list of skills and knowledge that students are responsible for learning throughout the school year. For each skill or concept, students receive a separate mark. For example, a standards-based report card would list these types of skills and knowledge:

- Reading Foundational Skills - Phonics and Word Recognition
- Reading Informational Text - Key Ideas and Details
- Writing - Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Mathematics - Measurement and Data
- Physical Education - Effort

In the past, students earned a range of marks depending what grade they were in and what what being assessed, such as A, U, +, 2, D, 4, I. Now, students receive number marks that show how well they have mastered the skills and are equivalent across all elementary grade levels. Students will receive a 1, 2, or 3 mark for each academic or social skill, as listed below.

- 3 - Meeting grade level standard
- 2 - Approaching grade level standard
- 1 - Not meeting grade meeting level standard

The marks on a standards-based report card are different from traditional letter grades. Letter grades are often calculated by combining how well the student met his particular teacher's expectations, how he/she performed on assignments and tests, and how much effort the teacher believes he put in. Letter grades do not tell parents which skills their children have mastered or whether they are working at grade level. Because one fourth-grade teacher might be reviewing basic multiplication facts, while another is teaching multiplication of two- or three-digit numbers, getting an A in each of these classes would mean very different things.

Standards-based report cards should provide more consistency between teachers than traditional report cards, because all students are evaluated on the same grade-appropriate skills. Parents can see exactly which skills and knowledge their children have learned. Students will still be assessed on expectations for the end of each grading period, not the end of year, as in the past.

Why are parent conferences scheduled before report cards?

Efforts to better understand parent aspirations and perspectives foster mutual respect, build a trusting partnership, and foster a personalized learning experience. Collaborating with parents earlier in the school year in an individualized setting allows schools and teachers to gain invaluable information of each student's strengths, needs, learning styles, and interests, therefore, enabling for more realistic, achievable, and personalized student goals. Additionally, holding conferences earlier in the school year provides teachers enough time to learn about their students and allows for greatest effect of the detailed and personalized insight that only a parent can provide. Parent feedback has continually indicated support for building this partnership earlier in the school year. Furthermore, this timing allows for time to assess student reading behavior trends. Reading assessments are held at this time and at the end of the school year to facilitate more accuracy of learning, extended time frame for measurement of school impact on student growth, and support for necessary interventions. At the beginning of the school year, teachers utilize assessments from the previous year as a starting point, as well as informal assessments through small group and individual reading conferring.

How will students receiving special education services be graded?

A child's IEP (Individual Education Plan) includes modifications and/or accommodations to support his or her progress on current grade level standards as assessed on a standards-based report card. For students who earn a consistent and significant amount of 1 marks (not meeting standards) in the area of service, the IEP team should meet to discuss if additional supports need to be in place. For students who earn a consistent and significant amount of 3 marks (meeting standards) in the area of service, the IEP team needs to consider reducing services/exiting. To comply with law, documentation of progress specific to IEP goals and objectives are reported to parents on IEP forms each reporting period.

How will students in the ELL (English Language Learner) Program be graded?

Students identified as ELL (English Language Learners) will participate in the district's grading and reporting of grade level academic achievement and nonacademic indicators. If an identified ELL student requires accommodations or modifications as defined by an IEP or Section 504 Plan and the accommodations or modifications are written in an IEP or Section 504 Plan, then the IEP or Section 504 Plan should specify when, where, and to what extent the accommodation/modification should occur and who is responsible for implementing the accommodation/modification.

How will a student be assessed as meeting the standards?

Student learning will be assessed over time as demonstrated by a range of assignments, tasks, and assessments. A collection of evidence demonstrating student growth on personalized learning goals and a portfolio of multiple measures will be used to assess student learning. Authentic assessment will occur through Reader's Workshop, Writer's Workshop, and CGI. Less emphasis will be placed on procedural learning than in the past, and more critical thinking, problem-solving, and analysis skills. Learning is not just about getting the right answer, but also about the process and necessary skills. Mistakes are a valuable opportunity to learn and grow. Learning is not usually exact. Students do not always fit in perfectly anywhere. We want to show growth in goals for personalized learning. The purpose of the report card is to communicate to parents, guardians, and students, ongoing achievement towards grade level state standards. It identifies students' levels of progress with regard to state standards, areas of strength, and areas where improvement is needed.

On a 3-point grading scale, won't the entire grade level receive the same grades (mostly 2's and 3's)?

Learning is a process and it should be expected that repeated exposure and experiences are necessary to gain ownership of new skills and strategies. An assessment score of "2" indicates the student is progressing towards the standard. Once a student can *consistently demonstrate* his/her ability over time to apply a thorough, in-depth knowledge of basic and extended concepts through self-motivation and the ability to apply skills with consistent accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality, he/she meets or exceeds the standard and would receive a "3".

Without a 4 score or exceeding grade level standards mark, how will a high-achieving student be motivated to learn?

Report card grades should not be the major motivator for learning. Research has shown that most students are not naturally driven to get a grade, but rather to have a choice of challenging problems that they can connect to and have success with over an extended time period. Motivation for grades has a long tradition of being driven by adults more than kids. Student motivation in these types of situations is to please the adult and often hinders student ownership of their own learning. In recent years, secondary schools and counselors have seen a substantial increase in anxiety related to class grades which often leads to social emotional challenges. The National Institute of Mental Health found that nearly 1 in 10 teenagers suffer from some type of diagnosed anxiety disorder. At an early age, we want the emphasis that learning is about personalized growth more than academic marks and grades. The exceeding standard mark can also be confusing for students and parents. "Exceeding standards" can cause unnecessary stress for students that are excelling at their grade level, but just not learning ABOVE their grade level. Receiving a meeting standards mark or a "3" score on a report indicates that students are excelling at their grade level. However, a meeting grade level standards mark ("3" score) on a 4-point scale, where a "4" score means exceeding standards, is often viewed as getting "3 out of 4". For elementary students who do not understand what percentages/fractions mean, this score is often viewed as "getting one wrong". Students that are showing growth and meeting standards at their grade level should feel successful and celebrated. Additionally, from past schooling experiences, adults tend to associate a 1-4 point scale with A-D grading, which is not necessarily true on a 4-point scale. Each point value in a grading system where a "3" score is meeting standards more closely aligns with middle and high school grading, where an "A" and sometimes a "B" grade means that students are achieving or meeting grade level standards. There are no "exceeding" or above grade level marks at the middle and high school. The performance of students achieving at the highest level should receive that same in-depth feedback as all students. This more impactful feedback should be communicated through regular parent-teacher communication and the report card comment box.

How can parents explain to their children why they did not get a 3?

It is important that parents and teachers have honest conversations with students. Some concepts and skills are more difficult to grasp than others, but given time and motivation, students can continually challenge themselves. Attitudes are contagious, and it is important that adults involved convey to the student that *learning is a process* about personalized growth. A score of "2" while learning a new skill or concept is appropriate. A score of 3 demonstrating mastery is to be celebrated.

What should parents do if they don't understand the new report card?

Teachers and parents are partners in student learning and personal growth. Parents should talk with the child's teacher to discuss what they do not understand or is confusing about the report card marks. If a parent is not sure if their child is doing well, they can ask the teacher to explain how learning is assessed or review past student work samples that demonstrate student progress. For example, if a child is not proficient in some skills, parents could ask the teacher if they should be concerned about his/her progress. Or, is their child on track to be proficient by the end of the year? Parents can also ask whether the student is completing assignments and developing good work habits? If parents are concerned about a specific skill, they can ask the teacher how they can help their child with it at home. Standards-based report cards give parents more detailed information about how their child is progressing in each subject throughout the school year. This additional information is a valuable resource to help students, parents, and teachers support students in reading their academic goals by the end of the school year.