

TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Standards-Based Report Cards

The Township of Franklin Public School District is proud to build upon its implementation of standards-based report cards for grades K-4 during the 2016-2017 academic year. Although this is nothing new for students in our earlier grade levels, the transition to a standards-based report card comes from the belief that the previous report card did not fully communicate what students are expected to know and be able to do as set forth by grade level standards. The standards-based report cards will benefit students, teachers, and parents, providing an improved picture of each child's learning.

The new standards-based report card provides a more detailed outline of the expectations in each of the major academic areas. We believe that your understanding of school expectations, in combination with being aware of how well your child is progressing towards the goals at his or her grade level, is a crucial component of the learning process. We look forward to working together to provide your child with the knowledge and work habits needed to be successful and to reach his or her full potential. It is our hope that the responses to the questions below will provide you with more of an understanding of the benefits of the standards-based report card.

What is a standards-based report card?

A standards-based report card is designed to inform parents about their child's progress toward achieving specific learning standards and skills. Learning standards in the state of New Jersey establish challenging performance expectations for all students at each grade level. They describe what students should know and be able to do and serve as a basis for the Township of Franklin Public School's curriculum, instruction, and assessment model.

Why was the report card changed to the standards-based report card?

The report card was changed to provide more information to parents about student progress and degree of learning through the year. On a traditional report card, 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 further expanded by a list of skills and knowledge students are responsible for learning. Students receive a separate mark for each standard of learning that is being measured.

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

The purpose of the standards-based report card is to provide valuable, detailed feedback to parents regarding the progress their children are making toward specific content indicators and learning targets. This report card allows parents and students to clearly understand what is expected at each grade level. With this understanding, parents will be better able to guide and support their child, helping him/her to be successful in a rigorous academic program.

How does the standards-based report card compare to the traditional letter grade system?

Standards-based reporting is different from traditional letter grade reporting. Traditional letter or numeric grades are often averages calculated by combining how well the student met a teacher’s expectations, how the student performed on assignments and tests, how much effort the teacher believes the student put forth, and how the student is doing in comparison to classmates. Letter or numeric grades do not always tell parents which skills their child has mastered or where he or she is working at grade level. The standards-based report card measures how well an individual student is doing in relation to learning standards, not other factors that sometimes negatively impact an accurate measure of learning. This will give parents a better understanding of their child’s strengths and weakness and encourage all students to do their best. Rather than using a number or letter on a report card, the following identifies the scales that will be used on the grades 3 and 4 report cards:

Performance Level Rubric
E = Exceeds Exceeding grade-level standard for trimester
M = Meets Meeting grade-level standard for trimester
P = Progressing Progressing toward grade-level standard for trimester
N = Needs Improvement Demonstrating minimal progress and at risk of not meeting grade-level standard

What does it mean for a child to exceed the grade level standards?

Another change for students and parents is understanding the concept of exceeding the grade level standard. **Exceeding is not the equivalent of an A on a traditional report card.** For example, if a third grader received A’s on every math test during the marking period, he or she would likely receive an A on a traditional report card. If those math tests measured only the concepts third graders are expected to master, those A’s would be the equivalent of meeting the standard on a standards-based report card; the student is performing very well in regard to grade level expectations, but not necessarily more. Standards-based report cards allow for students to demonstrate their ability to apply skills and knowledge beyond grade level expectations. Performance is characterized by self-motivation and the ability to apply skills with consistent accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality beyond the current grade level.

Why not just have a standards-based system as an additional reporting component to the traditional report card?

Traditional grading for elementary level students does not communicate to parents what teachers want them to know about their child's strengths and weaknesses. The elementary level is based on a growth-development model where learning is valued as a process. Traditional letter/percent grades and standards-based rubrics do not assess in the same way and therefore are not compatible to one another.

My child has an IEP. Does this change how he or she will be graded?

If your child has an IEP, there are modifications and accommodations within the IEP that support his or her progress on grade level standards. The unique needs of every child are valued and the same considerations will be applied within a standards-based system. As identified in the IEP, modifications and accommodations may be provided to meet your child's specific needs. Identification of modified expectations and student progress toward these learning goals are identified when the report card is completed.

How are parents expected to explain their child's performance as identified on the standard-based report card?

It is important that both parents and teachers have conversations with students regarding their learning process. Some concepts and skills are more difficult to grasp than others, but given time and motivation, students can continually challenge themselves and grow academically. Attitudes are contagious and it is important that adults convey to the child that learning is an active process that needs to be respected. A score of *N = Needs Improvement* indicates that the child is currently unable to, or has significant difficulty with, a particular skill that has been taught and practiced. A score of *P = Progressing* while learning a new skill or concept is appropriate. A score of *M = Meets* is acknowledgement that the student is able to perform at grade level expectations. A score of *E = Exceeds* indicates a strength being recognized that is above and beyond the grade level expectations.

The report card is an important part of our school-home partnership. We are excited to utilize the standards-based report cards within our schools, knowing that students, teachers, and parents will all benefit from a shift in the way which we report learning. If you have questions or would like more information about the report card, please feel free to contact a member of the district's Curriculum department.