



**Standards Based Learning System:
An Elementary and Middle School
Parent's Guide to
Report Cards and Grading**

October 2017

What is a Standards-Based Learning and Assessment system?

- Provides content standards for each grade level with end-of-the-year expectations
- Well-designed curriculum, quality teaching, engaging curriculum and strategic assessment practices
- Tells what students know and are able to do now and what would move students to the the next set of concepts to understand
- Uses a standards-based report card that provides feedback across courses, units, and lessons so that you can see how your child is progressing in each content standard
- Work habits, participation skills, effort and behavior, are reported separately from achievement. These College and Career Readiness skills, while very important, are different than subject area achievement and will be reported separately.

Why this change from traditional grading to Standards Based Learning?

- Traditional grading is highly subjective because...
 - When a student receives a letter grade on their report card, it represents a combination of homework, tests, work habits as well as the student's understanding of subject content.
 - It does not provide the student or family a clear picture of what the student knows and is able to do.
 - It also encourages the student to focus more attention on completing homework rather than on understanding the content.
- In a Standards Based Learning System, the grade...
 - Provides feedback on a student's proficiency at specific standards (skills) as opposed to an average of homework, tests, or work habits that generalizes all the activities completed in a class.
 - Encourages the student to focus on understanding the content rather than "jumping through hoops" to earn or raise the grade.

Thus, the standards-based grade is more objective and focuses on ability, not compliance.

What is the purpose of changing to a Standard-Based system?

Standards Based Learning Systems focus on three practices of strong teaching: Learning Goals, Assessment and Feedback.

Learning Goals:

- The Standards-Based systems focus on the student's understanding of subject content and ability to achieve the Learning Goals for each grade level.
- Learning Goals indicate what standards will be covered and what the expectation is for each skill (by grade level).

Assessment:

- Assessment focuses on how well students learn the skills from the Learning Goals.
- Parents can use data from your child's assessments to:
 - Understand how to best help your child.
 - Understand how your child learns best.

Feedback:

- Learning Goals are very clear standards. So, teachers will be able to provide clear feedback to students and families about growth achieved and areas where more growth (or work) is needed.

Grading Practices not a part of Standards-Based Learning and Assessment

- Point penalties for late work, academic dishonesty or attendance
- Extra credit points for things unrelated to standards
- Assigning group scores when students engage in cooperative learning
- Curving class scores or grades
- Grading homework

These areas will be addressed through college and career ready work habits, participation, effort and behavior and will be reported separately through the comments section of the report card.

What is grading based on in a Standards-Based Learning and Assessment system?

- Content standards, not assessment methods (i.e. Does the student understand the content?)
- Levels of proficiency, not points and percentages
- Achievement only with work habits, participation skills, effort and behavior reported separately
- Performance on assessments of learning (exams, quizzes), not learning activities

How do Proficiency Levels replace letter grades?

- Students are given a proficiency score (0-4) and descriptive feedback on their progress based on a collection of work rather than on each individual assignment to describe how well a student has mastered a concept.
- Student proficiency scores demonstrate the student's current progress compared to where the student should be at the end of the year. Marks are listed on the grading scale in the next section.

Grading Scale

Rubric Scores and Proficiency Levels	Strand and Standard Descriptors
<p>4 Advanced</p>	<p>Consistently demonstrates understanding of complex skills and concepts</p> <p>Student exceeds performance expectations by demonstrating in-depth understanding of <i>complex</i> concepts and the ability to apply academic knowledge and skills drawn from course priority standards <i>in extended or new contexts</i>.</p>
<p>3 Proficient</p>	<p>Consistently demonstrates understanding of core skills and concepts</p> <p>Student consistently meets performance expectations by demonstrating understanding of core concepts and the ability to apply academic knowledge and skills drawn from course priority standards in familiar contexts.</p>
<p>2 Developing</p>	<p>Developing a basic understanding of core skills and concepts</p> <p>Student partially meets performance expectations by demonstrating basic understanding of core concepts and the ability to apply academic knowledge and skills drawn from course priority standards in familiar contexts with minor gaps in understanding.</p>
<p>1 Beginning</p>	<p>Demonstrates some understanding of core skills and concepts</p> <p>Student minimally meets performance expectations by demonstrating some understanding of core concepts and a partial ability to apply academic knowledge and skills drawn from the majority of course priority standards with gaps in understanding.</p>
<p>0 No Evidence</p>	<p>Does not demonstrate understanding of core concepts or is unable to apply knowledge or skills</p> <p>Student does not meet performance expectations by failing to demonstrate sufficient understanding or sufficient evidence of core concepts and does not demonstrate the ability to apply academic knowledge and skills drawn from course priority standard.</p>
<p>Not Assessed</p>	<p>This skill and concept were not assessed at this time.</p>

How to Read the Key Parts of the Standards-Based Report Card

Standard for which teacher is providing feedback

Student's current level of proficiency

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Student:
 Student ID:
 School:
 Teacher:

ENGLISH				
	Term			
	QTR	QTR	QTR	QTR
KG	1	2	3	4
[KG][ELA][LANG] Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing	1	2	3	4
[KG][ELA][LANG] Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content	1	2	3	4
[KG][ELA][LANG] Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.	1	2	3	4
[KG][ELA][LANG] Language - Overall	1	2	3	4
LITERATURE				
[KG][READ][LIT] Literature - Overall	2	3	4	4
[KG][READ][LIT] With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	4	4	3	3
[KG][READ][LIT] Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.	2	2	3	4
[KG][READ][LIT] With prompting and support retell familiar stories, including key details.	3	4	4	4
[KG][READ][LIT] With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.	3	4	4	4
[KG][READ][LIT] Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.	2	4	3	3
[KG][READ][LIT] With prompting and	2	3	3	4

ENGLISH				
	Term			
	QTR	QTR	QTR	QTR
KG	1	2	3	4
support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).				
READING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS				
[KG][READ][RFS] Print Concepts: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.	2	3	4	4
[KG][READ][RFS] Phonological Awareness: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).	2	3	3	4
[KG][READ][RFS] Phonics and Word Recognition: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words	2	3	4	4
[KG][READ][RFS] Fluency: Read emergent-reader text with purpose and understanding.	2	3	3	4
[KG][READ][RFS] Reading Foundational Skills - Overall	2	2	3	4
READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT				
[KG][READ][RIT] With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	3	3	3	4
[KG][READ][RIT] Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.	3	3	3	4
[KG][READ][RIT] With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.	2	3	4	4
[KG][READ][RIT] With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).	2	3	4	4
[KG][READ][RIT] Reading Informational Text - Overall	2	2	4	4
SPEAKING AND LISTENING				
[KG][ELA][SL] Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and	1	2	3	4

ENGLISH				
	Term			
	QTR	QTR	QTR	QTR
KG	1	2	3	4
texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.				
[KG][ELA][SL] Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	1	1	2	3
[KG][ELA][SL] Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	1	2	3	4
[KG][ELA][SL] Speaking and Listening - Overall	1	2	3	4
WRITING				
[KG][ELA][WR] Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., My favorite book is...).	3	3	3	4
[KG][ELA][WR] Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.	3	3	3	4
[KG][ELA][WR] Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.	3	3	3	4
[KG][ELA][WR] With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.	3	3	3	4
[KG][ELA][WR] Writing - Overall	3	3	3	4

MATHEMATICS				
	Term			
	QTR	QTR	QTR	QTR
KG	1	2	3	4
COUNTING & CARDINALITY				

Special Student Populations and the Standards-based Report Card

How is an English Language Learner, who is still acquiring English language assessed using a Standards-based Report Card?

- English Language Learners (ELs) are assessed at their current grade level expectations using the appropriate grade-level standards in the same manner and with the same frequency as non-EL general education students with appropriate accommodations.
- A supplemental EL Progress Report will be provided with additional information regarding language acquisition.
- Elementary/middle students come to our schools with a variety of educational backgrounds and require a variety of supports to access the curriculum standards. At times, while maintaining access and engagement in rigorous grade level standards, the

educational program for an EL student may be adjusted, based on language proficiency, to enable the student to acquire more academic vocabulary and acquisition of content.

- Any modification will be noted on the report card as a comment. During parent conferences, teachers will discuss with parents the following: the child's current level of English proficiency, the child's opportunity to learn the content, and/or the child's ability and or growth to demonstrate the appropriate grade-level standards.

How is a student with an IEP assessed using a Standards-based Report card?

- Students with an IEP are assessed at their current grade level using the appropriate grade-level standards based report cards in the same manner and with the same frequency as students without an IEP.
- Research has demonstrated that children with IEPs who struggle in reading and mathematics can successfully learn grade level content and make significant academic progress when appropriate instruction, services, and supports are provided.
- Grade-level standards should allow ALL students to engage, access and be assessed in ways that fit their strengths, needs and interests.
 - Students with IEPs must be provided specially designed instruction that meets their individual needs. It is expected that each individual student with an IEP will require unique services and supports matched to their strengths and needs in order to close achievement gaps in grade-level standards.
- Alternate standards are only available for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
 - Students who participate in the alternate achievement standards, as determined by the IEP team, will receive a standards based report card that is aligned to the appropriate grade level alternate achievement standards.
 - A supplemental IEP progress report will be provided with additional information regarding the student's progress on IEP goals.

What about students in the Dual Language Program?

- Students in the Dual Language Program are Spanish and English speaking students working to achieve the skills of understanding, speaking, reading and writing in two languages. The goal is greater success in Spanish and English along with the understanding of customs and values of the cultures associated with the two languages being taught.
- The premise is to foster continued development and retention of a child's literacy skills in their native language and to utilize the language as a vehicle for exploring and acquiring a second language.

- Students in the Dual Language Program are graded according to grade-level standards in line with their peers on the grade-level report card.

How did RUSD include the voice of numerous stakeholders in the process?

- The request to make the shift was started with conversations of teachers in 2015, requesting our district focus on standards.
- Voluntary curriculum writing committees made up of teachers were established to develop the vision and create the report cards aligned to the key standards for each grade level.
- After the development of the report cards other groups of teachers and Principals, parents and students reviewed the report cards and provided feedback and the ideas were included as development continued.

What other districts are using a Standards-based Report Card?

- Many large districts across the nation including Northbrook, Illinois; Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina; Denver, Colorado; San Diego, California are using Standards-based Report Cards with success. Locally, Glendale and River Hills School District, Milwaukee Public Schools, Shorewood, Pewaukee, Wauwatosa and West Allis are using it as well.

Will some groups of students be graded differently on this Report Card?

- With the Standards Based Report Card, all students should be receiving feedback as to where they are performing within the grade level standards, including students receiving Special Education services.
- Through the IEP meeting discussions, the team should develop a plan that targets specific disability related needs that are inhibiting the student from making progress at the same rate as his or her peers.
- Through the provision of appropriate specially designed instruction, related services, and/or supplementary aids or services, the student should be able to make progress towards the grade level standards.
- If progress is not being made, the IEP team may need to reconvene to revisit and adjust goals and/or services, as appropriate.
- Each standard addresses a variety of skills, many of which the student may be able to demonstrate proficiency if provided with the appropriate instructional supports.

How is a child's effort on school work and class participation reflected?

- Student work habits are scored separately, and provide the opportunity for teachers to give feedback to help students improve in habits that will ensure their employability and success in high education in their futures.

