

# REVISED EARLY LEARNING REPORT CARDS

E R A E L E M E N T A R Y S C H O O L



## STANDARDS BASED REPORT CARDS:

A CLEARER PICTURE OF YOUR CHILD'S ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Era ISD strives to continuously improve teaching and learning for the students we serve. Parents and families are true partners in this process, and we want to ensure that we are in constant communication about each child's academic progress. Parents need accurate and meaningful information regarding their child's strength and opportunities for targeted support when needed, especially for our youngest learners. In response, Era ISD has revised our Kindergarten, First Grade and Second Grade report cards to be better communication tools for parents.

**THROUGH THE REVISED EARLY LEARNING REPORT CARDS, PARENTS WILL BE WELL-EQUIPPED TO HELP STUDENTS AT HOME AS THEY PROGRESS TOWARD KEY GRADE LEVEL TARGETS.**

In the past, students in Kindergarten received an E, S or N to indicate whether or not they had mastered the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. First graders received numerical scores that offered general information, but didn't clearly indicate exactly where students were in their learning journey. In our revised report card, both parents and students are aware of clear learning goals and when that target should be mastered during the progression of learning throughout the year. Grades on traditional report cards often contained a combination of averages, work habits and participation. Our revised report cards focus on documenting learning by each standard or learning target. We understand that our youngest students are just learning all of the procedures and behavior expectations, so work habits and social skills will be documented in its own section of the report card. The grade level target for each learning standard is a "Meets Standard." When a (MS) has been earned, the student has met the grade level expectations for that learning strand. While some learning strands are expected to be mastered early in the year, many of the standards do not have mastery expectations until the end of the school year. Some areas of the report card will be shaded, indicating that the standard has either not been introduced to students yet or is not yet ready for formal assessment. You will likely see more "Approaches Standard" indicators on the report card early in the year and "Meets Standard" indicators later in the year as the learning naturally progresses throughout the school year.

## HOW DOES THE REVISED EARLY LEARNING REPORT CARD DIFFER FROM TRADITIONAL GRADING?

Our early learning report card will measure a student's mastery of grade-level standards by prioritizing the most recent, consistent level of performance. Traditionally, multiple attempts in learning have been averaged; not clearly communicating where the student ended up in the learning progression. Instead of averaging learning into a percentage, our new reporting tool will clearly and accurately explain to parents exactly where their child is in their learning.

THE EARLY LEARNING REPORT CARD WILL MEASURE A STUDENT'S MASTERY OF GRADE-LEVEL STANDARDS BY PRIORITIZING THE MOST RECENT, CONSISTENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE.

## BENEFITS OF STANDARDS-BASED GRADING FOR STUDENTS

- Students are partners in their own learning.
- Students monitor their own progress toward the achievement of specified learning targets.
- Learning targets are clearly defined and aligned with state standards.
- Students are offered multiple opportunities and ways through which to demonstrate proficiency.
- Instruction meets the needs of all students. All students can achieve their highest potential.

BEFORE: "MY TEACHER 'GAVE ME' A 75."

AFTER: "I NEED TO WORK ON USING MEASUREMENT TO DESCRIBE LENGTH."

## BENEFITS OF STANDARDS-BASED GRADING FOR PARENTS

- Parents can monitor their student's progress.
- Parents can see exactly what their children know and are able to do.
- Parents know in what areas their children need more support and where their students should be pushed to higher levels.
- Report card grades are less mysterious and have more meaning.
- Specific feedback on student progress helps parents build self-esteem, pride, and motivation for students.

BEFORE: THE PARENT SEES A GRADE 80% ON ASSIGNMENT AND WONDERS 'WHAT WAS THE 20% THEY MISSED?'

AFTER: THE PARENTS ARE ABLE TO IDENTIFY SKILLS MET TOWARD STANDARD AND WHICH ARE STILL DEVELOPING

## BENEFITS OF STANDARDS-BASED GRADING FOR TEACHERS

- Education becomes more learner-focused, so the teacher and the student work more closely together.
- Teachers of the same courses have aligned expectations and standards.
- Teachers work more closely together to align practices and expectations for mastery of the curriculum.
- Teachers know exactly where students stand in their progress toward learning targets and what supports need to be provided.
- Assessment results help teachers determine when students need extra help and when they need more challenging work.

BEFORE: BY REPORTING ONE GRADE PER SUBJECT, THE TEACHER OFTEN FELT IT WAS AN INCOMPLETE PICTURE OF THE LEARNING THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE.  
AFTER: THE TEACHER IS MORE EQUIPPED TO IDENTIFY AND COMMUNICATE WHERE EACH STUDENT IS ON THE LEARNING PROGRESSION.

Adapted from "Why Standards-Based Grading?" Quakertown Community School District, November 2011.

## STANDARDS-BASED REPORT CARDS IN GRADES K-2

This assessment design will clearly show students and parents the skills which must be learned in each grade and students' progress toward mastery of these skills. Parents will see not only how their child performs in a specific subject, but how their child performs in each component of that subject.

Progress reports (available the 3rd week of the reporting period) and final report cards (available at approximately the 6th week of the reporting period) will be available for parents to view in Ascender.

The Era ISD Early Learning Report Card (K-2) is a standards-based continuum, meaning that progress is reported on the knowledge and skills your child is expected to master at each grade level. The continuum is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and ranges from Exceeds Standard to Insufficient Progress toward the Standard.

It is important to note that for each indicator on the report card, "Meets Standard" is the goal and indicates "end-of-year" mastery for that concept or skill.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Why does Era ISD use a standards-based report card?**

The report card is designed to provide more specific and accurate information to parents than a traditional report card. Research has shown that giving specific feedback helps students to set goals and focus on continuous growth, rather than receiving an averaged number grade that gives imprecise information about performance.

## **How were the standards for the report cards determined?**

Standards for the report card are aligned with the standards established by the state of Texas, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Standards selected are essential for success in current and subsequent grades and are aligned with the STAAR tests students will take in 3rd grade and beyond.

## **How will my child's progress be reported?**

ES- Exceeds Standard

MS-Meets Standard

AS-Approaches Standard

IPS-Insufficient Progress toward the Standard

■ Skill not yet assessed

Student progress toward standards will be marked using the above key. The goal is for students to reach the level of "Meets Standard." It is also important for parents to understand that standards may evolve in rigor and expectation to greater levels of difficulty throughout the year. If a student's progress appears to dip during the year, that doesn't necessarily mean that s/he has regressed. Instead, it may be that the level of expectation has been raised and that the student hasn't yet demonstrated mastery of the new expectations. The shaded box indicates that a standard hasn't yet been taught to the degree that mastery is expected or appropriate. The shadings are aligned with teachers' curriculum used in all subjects.

## **How will teachers assess these standards?**

Teachers may assess standards in a variety of ways. Formative and summative assessments such as teacher observation, student conferences, small group participation, student data and student work such as projects, research, portfolios, notebooks, etc. will be used to determine students' progress at the end of the grading period. Additionally, quizzes, paper/pencil tasks, and assessment probes may also be used.

## **How do I know what skills to help my child with at home?**

By looking at any areas not yet mastered on the report card, parents can help their child with weaker areas or extend their understanding of standards on which they have reached mastery. Additionally, children can always benefit from additional time reading at home. This aids in helping them to build reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension – which helps in ALL subject areas.

## **What determines if my child has mastered a skill?**

Teachers will use a common rubric to align the criteria for student mastery of the standards across the district. Teachers are looking for students to consistently demonstrate understanding of the standard in assessment and daily situations.

## **What happens when my child masters a concept?**

Once a student shows mastery in a concept, teachers will continue to challenge students either with learning that extends an existing concept or teaching that raises the level of expectation for mastery. Teachers will communicate some of these extensions to parents in the comment portions of the report card.

## **What happens if my child moves from Era ISD?**

Due to the specificity with the new standards-based report card, the receiving teacher will know exactly what standards have been taught and mastered as well as areas of needed improvement. Since the standards on the report card were derived from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, schools within the state will be instructing and assessing according to comparable standards. Likewise, students moving to a district outside of Texas will be able to present their new school with a detailed report card showing specific skills that have been mastered.

## **Why are we using Standards-Based Report Cards (SBRC) in elementary when middle school and high school are using a traditional grading system?**

Using standards for reporting progress in kindergarten and first grades helps students understand the learning targets and set goals for their own improvement. This provides students with greater ownership of their learning.

## **How will this type of report card impact my child with special needs?**

Students receiving special education services will continue to work toward their goals set forth in their Individualized Educational Plan. They will receive a report card that reflects their progress (and will be notated with an \* if content has been modified per their IEP goals) and they'll receive an IEP progress report.

## **WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

Please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher or reference the district website. On the website you can access links to parent guides by grade level, which show a more in-depth look as to how subjects are evaluated. We look forward to working together to provide you and your child with the best possible knowledge and tools to be successful in Era ISD and beyond.