

Mansfield Elementary School



**Standards-Based Report Cards  
Handbook  
2022**

The purpose of the Mansfield Elementary School Report Card is to provide a communication framework among parents/guardians, teachers, and students that fosters each student's lifelong academic growth and character development. The report card describes a student's progress towards mastery on grade level standards.

### **Standards-based grading**

A standards-based report card communicates student progress toward meeting learning standards. Teachers assess student performance against these learning standards which are specific and observable grade-level skills articulated in the Mansfield School District curriculum, instruction, and assessment model. The Standards-Based Report Card:

- Emphasizes the most important student skills in each subject area and grade level
- Evaluates a child's mastery of a specific skill with a subject area
- Identifies areas of student strengths and weakness to inform instruction

Standards-based report cards give a grade for each learning goal, so students receive multiple grades in each subject area. For example, in third grade math, the subject is broken into several categories such as: *Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operations in Base 10, Number and Operations-Fractions, Measurement and Data, and Geometry*. Within each category, there are lists of math skills students should be able to do, as well as an indicator to reflect how your child is progressing towards achieving the learning standards.

The *Behaviors that Support Learning* reflect learning behaviors and success attributes. These characteristics are graded separately to provide an accurate picture of a child's academic achievement. Behaviors include; respects school and classroom rules, works cooperatively, follows directions, attends to tasks, etc.

The advantage of separating academics and personal and social growth is that parents can determine if a child needs help with an academic standard or a behavior. Our goal is to develop students who not only master academic content but also demonstrate characteristics necessary for successful learning throughout their lives.

### **How is standards-based grading different from traditional grading?**

In the traditional 100-point grading system, grades are typically generated from a series of scores from all work assigned in the class, including classwork, homework, projects, quizzes, tests, etc. These scores are often arranged in the grade book by the type of assignment rather than by the essential outcomes for the class. Therefore, the final grade becomes a cumulative numerical average from many unrelated activities, which

also often include points for non-academic factors such as behavior, participation, effort, and attitude.

Standards-based grading, however, focuses solely on progress toward mastery of the essential standards. A standards-based grade book tracks learning through activities that focus on standards and do not include non-academic factors such as behavior, participation, effort, and attitude. These factors are important and are assessed and reported, but through a separate and more appropriate method.

### **What are the proficiency levels on the Standards-Based Report Card?**

The academic performance level represents a student's progress towards mastery of grade level standards. There are four categories.

- **ES=Exceeding Standards.** Extends key concepts, processes, and skills. Consistently works beyond grade-level benchmarks.

**Student Friendly:** I know and can do it well enough to make connections that weren't taught. Also, I can teach it.

- **MS=Meet the Standard.** Consistently grasps and applies key concepts, processes, and skills. Meets grade-level benchmarks.

**Student Friendly:** I know and can do everything that was taught with making little to no mistakes.

- **AS=Approaching the Standard.** Beginning to grasp and apply key concepts, processes, and skills. Progressing toward grade-level benchmarks.

**Student Friendly:** I am starting to get it with help, but I am still confused.

- **NS=Needs Support.** Not grasping key concepts, processes, and skills. Area of concern that requires support.

**Student Friendly:** I don't know or can't do any of it.

### **How do the teachers determine students' proficiency levels?**

Teachers determine your child's academic progress through ongoing assessment. They consider:

- Knowledge of the child (How does this student learn best? In what ways do they communicate learning?).
- Evidence of student performance (work samples, written/online assessments, anecdotal notes garnered from teacher observation and conversations).
- Knowledge of what the child is expected to know and be able to do (district curriculum and state standards).
- Rubrics; The rubrics clearly delineate what a child needs to know or be able to do in order to earn an ES, MS, AS, or NS on their report card. These rubrics align to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. These rubrics are available for you to read on the district website.

***Please note:***

- Proficiency levels reflect the goals of the current trimester and are not always indicators of linear performance from trimester to trimester. Please refer to the rubric for guidance.
- Marks of “Meeting the Standard (MS)” and “Approaching the Standard (AS)” reflect that a student is working within grade-level expectations.
- A mark of “Meeting the Standard (MS)” is the expected goal for students. This indicates that they are meeting the academic standards for that grade level.
- Marks of “Exceeding the Standard (ES)” and “Needs Support (NS)” indicate that a student’s performance is significantly above or below grade level standards and requires dialogue with the teacher.
- Different students progress at different rates so standards may be met in varying amounts of time with varying amounts of teacher support.

## **FAQ**

### **Why are only some of the standards listed on the report card?**

Teams of teachers and administrators reviewed the New Jersey Learning Standards for each grade level in the process of developing the reporting system. In the review, the committee chose the descriptors which were considered most significant for student growth in each subject area and at each grade level. These standards are often referred to as “priority standards.” It does not mean that the other standards are less important, or that they will not be taught. In order to effectively communicate student progress, specific standards were selected to efficiently report growth during each of the trimesters.

### **What should the expectations for my child be?**

Remembering that every child learns differently, the goal for students is to reach “Meets the Standards (MS)” when the teacher has completed a topic.

### **Can a student perform at a Meet Standard (MS) during one trimester and then receive an Approaching Standard (AS) or Needs Support (NS) in subsequent trimesters?**

In a majority of the standards, the expectations change from one trimester to another as the student moves toward the grade level expectations for the end of the year. As such, a student may find that expectations have increased in each trimester. They may result in very different levels of proficiency. A student could receive a “Meets the Standards (MS)” in the first trimester, and an “Approaching the Standard (AS)” or “Needs Support (NS)” in the subsequent trimesters.

### **Some areas on my child’s report card were not evaluated this trimester and the report card is grayed out. Why wasn’t this standard evaluated?**

Some standards will be taught each trimester. These standards will be assessed more frequently, and progress will be reported each trimester. The level of difficulty in the task and/or text may change, or the level of text complexity may change, making the expectation more demanding (i.e. main idea). In other areas, the skills can progress to something more difficult. Other standards require an entire unit of study that may be unrelated to the current topic. In this case, the unit may be grayed out for a trimester

since the skill may not have been assessed at that time. When the standard is taught, the standard is evaluated.