

## **ELEMENTARY REPORT CARD – INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

This document is intended to serve as a general overview to help parents understand the key concepts behind our Elementary Report Card. The report card, which is being implemented for the first time during the 2019-2020 school year, represents some significant departures from the former report card. We invite you to use this document to acquaint yourself with some of the key features of the report card. Questions about this document can be directed to your child's principal.

### **Background and General Considerations**

The Elementary Report Card was developed using a recursive process of gathering and responding to feedback from stakeholder groups, including teachers, parents, and administrators. All feedback was carefully considered and weighed in light of the charge to create a reporting system that provides clear communication to families, is aligned to essential learning standards and the PCSD grading philosophy, and is efficient for teachers to use.

The intent of this report card is to provide parents with a clear picture of their child's progress in school, one that doesn't need a lot of additional explanation. As a result parent/teacher communications will be able to focus on meaningful discussions about the individual child.

As always, a report card is only one form of parent communication. It is our practice to encourage ongoing communication between teachers and families throughout the course of the school year. Parent/teacher conferences, phone calls, emails, newsletters, and other forms of communication serve to build the strong partnership between home and school that supports a child's success. The report card, while important, provides only a snapshot of your child's journey throughout the year.

If you have additional questions or concerns about your child's progress and performance in school, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher, counselor, or principal. Our goal is to maintain positive two-way communication and a strong partnership between school and home in the service of every child's learning journey.

### **Point in Time Reporting and Scale**

The indicators on the classroom report card represent "end-of-year" expectations for student learning. Over the course of the school year, each child progresses toward the end-of-year expectations. Although each child's journey will be slightly different, everyone is working toward the same goal. The report card requires teachers, three times per year, to indicate the degree to which each child is meeting expectations along the way. Specifically, the report card is designed to let parents know whether their child is meeting expectations, as agreed upon by the entire district grade level, in November, March, and June of the school year.

The report card uses a 1-4 scale for marking all academic and learning skills indicators. The scale is defined as follows:

**4 Meets grade level expectations** – The student is consistently demonstrating solid proficiency in this area as expected at this time of year.

**3 Mostly meets grade level expectations** – The student is close to demonstrating proficiency in this area as expected at this time of year, but still has a few gaps, errors, or misconceptions.

**2 With support, inconsistently meets grade level expectations** – Even with support from peers or adults, the student is not yet consistently able to demonstrate proficiency in this area as expected at this time of year.

**1 Not yet meeting grade level expectations** – The student’s current level of performance is well below grade level expectations for this time of year.

**It is very important for parents to understand** that because we are using a point-in-time reporting system, it is possible, for example, that a student may receive a “4” on an indicator in November – communicating that they are meeting the grade level expectations for November – but then might receive a “3” for the same indicator in March. This would most typically occur due to the increased complexity of learning expectations between November and March and a child experiencing greater challenges with those complexities. In other words, a “4” on a November or March report card does not necessarily mean that the child has mastered the skill and is meeting end-of-year expectations and therefore it does not automatically translate to a 4 on subsequent report cards.

## Learning Skills

The Learning Skills identified on the report card reflect some of the most important skills and attitudes that contribute to a child’s academic success in school. They are not meant to reflect all the social emotional competencies that are vital to a child’s healthy development. In considering which skills to include on the report card, the committee members attempted to focus on skills that are readily observable in the classroom, skills that we provide explicit instruction on, and skills which can be linked to the achievement of academic standards. The development of social emotional competencies (empathy, perspective taking, the development of positive peer relationships, self-regulation, etc.) would be topics more appropriately discussed during parent/teacher conferences.

The Learning Skills, like the Academic Indicators, are marked using the same 1-4 scale as described above.

## Effort

In addition to reporting on the 1-4 scale for each academic indicator, the teacher will provide feedback relative to a child’s effort in each subject area. Teachers will also be able to make personalized comments about effort in each area.

**High** – The child is putting in effort above and beyond that which you would expect. On a very consistent basis, they are “giving it their all” and working hard to achieve their goals.

**Expected** – The child is putting in expected levels of effort in the classroom on a consistent basis.

**Varies** – The child’s effort varies from day to day. Effort is inconsistent. Some days their effort level is as expected, other days it falls short of that. The child needs some reminders to put forth more effort.

**Low** – The child’s effort falls below the classroom expectations. Work is not consistently completed and/or there is little evidence of pride in their work. The child appears to be getting things done just to get them done or is not getting them done at all. The child consistently needs reminders to put forth more effort.

## Special Area Report Cards

Art, music, and physical education teachers will have a separate report card, which will be made available to parents in January and June. They will use the same 1-4 scale for their report card and will also reflect the student’s “point in time” progress. Our art, music and physical education teachers work with several hundred students each year, meeting with each of them between once and three times per six-day cycle. By delaying the first reporting period for these subject areas, teachers will have more time to work with and get to know their students before assessing them for a report card. In addition, the Special Area report card in January will serve as an opportunity to highlight the work being done by students in those classrooms.

In addition to reporting on academic indicators for each of their areas, Special Area teachers will also be reporting on four Learning Skills for each child: Interacts Respectfully, Stays on Tasks, Follows Directions, and Works Cooperatively. This will give parents yet another window into their child’s performance across multiple school settings.

## Comments

Our goal was to create an elementary report card with indicators that communicate in plain language the skills and competencies that students are working towards. Consequently, teachers should not need to use the comments section in each area to explain the indicators. We therefore do not anticipate that teachers will be writing lengthy comments for each child in each area. If comments are included, they will focus on an individual child’s current strengths and challenges.

The comment section will be used to provide personalized feedback specific to each learner that goes beyond what is reflected in each of the academic indicators. The comments will explain any inconsistencies in performance noted by the teacher.

Comments will also be used in the event that a child is working beyond grade level expectations to describe how the child’s need for academic challenge is being met.