



New RSD Report Card for Grades K-1: A Guide for Families

Why do we need a new report card?

We believe that the purpose of grading is to communicate student achievement and progress on student learning objectives. Grades should not be about what students earn, but rather what they learn.

Student Narrative

The new report card features an expanded narrative that provides meaningful feedback for students and families on progress toward the district's transformative goals through the pillar of Student Experience, an important part of the district's strategic plan.

What are standards-based report cards?

A portion of the new Ringgold School District report card is skill- or standard-based reporting. This complements the narrative portion of the report card. A standards-based report card lists the most essential skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade level. Instead of letter grades, performance indicators are shared. These indicators convey how well students have mastered specific skills within a subject area. The indicator shows whether the student is *proficient* with the standard, *making progress* toward the standard, or *needing improvement* with mastery of the standard. It also informs the parent or guardian with specificity if a particular skill *needs improvement*, perhaps an area of concern.

Standards-based report cards should provide more consistency between teachers than traditional report cards, because all students are evaluated on the same grade-appropriate skills. Parents or guardians can see more specifically which skills their children have learned and have clearer sense of the knowledge acquired.

How do standards-based grades differ?

On many traditional report cards, 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 divided into a list of skills and knowledge that students are responsible for learning. Separate indicators for each skill or standard are shared.

The indicators on a standards-based report card are different from traditional letter grades. Letter grades are often calculated by combining how well the student met the particular teacher's expectations, how the student performed on assignments and tests, and perhaps how much effort the teacher believes the student invested. Letter grades do not convey to parents which skills their children have mastered or whether they are working at grade level. For example, because one first-grade teacher may be devoting more time to *reading out loud accurately*, while another is prioritizing teaching *reading for comprehension*, getting an A in each of these classes would mean very different things. It would be less clear to the parent/guardian of a child in these classes if their child was learning what the student is expected in order to meet the grade-level expectations.

Descriptors of Performance Indicators

Three indicators of progress are noted on the new report cards using a numeric marking system (P, M and N) for ELA and Math. Descriptors for each indicator are provided below:

P: Proficient

The student's performance consistently meets the grade level standard. The student grasps key concepts, processes, and skills.

M: Making Progress

The student's performance is approaching the grade level standard. The student is developing an understanding of key concepts, processes, and skills.

N: Needs Improvement

The student's performance does not meet the grade level standard. The student demonstrates a limited understanding of key concepts, processes, and skills.

The areas of Science, Social Studies, Art Education, Reading Enrichment, Physical Education, Technology Education and Music Education, the marking system will be Satisfactory and Needs Improvement (S/N).

S: Satisfactory

The student's performance consistently meets the grade level standard and expectation. The student grasps key concepts, processes and skills.

N: Needs Improvement

The student's performance does not meet the grade level standard. The student demonstrates a limited understanding of key concepts, processes, and skills.

Scoring

On a standards-based report card, an indicator of “P” is the expected goal for students, which conveys that the student is meeting the requirements of the academic standards for the student’s grade level. Indicators of “P” and “M” both show that a student is working within the expectations of the grade level. The difference is the level of independence and support a student needs to demonstrate mastery. The expectation is that most students will achieve a “P” by the end of the year for each grade-level standard. Evidence of learning informs future instruction and assessment. Learners are assessed based on the evidence of their progress toward mastery of those expectations established for each quarter period.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What exactly do you mean when referencing “standards?”

Standards are determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and determine what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. It would be overwhelming to list and report on every standard on each report card. The standards on the Ringgold School District report card are a snapshot of the Pennsylvania Common Core State Standards that have been deemed most essential.

What examples of data do teachers collect to determine progress reported?

With a skills or standards-based approach, teachers gather evidence of and evaluate student learning in a variety of ways using classroom observations, classwork, and assessments. The combination of these pieces of evidence, when reviewed with parents or guardians, provides a more detailed and comprehensive picture of student progress towards grade-level expectations.

Is it possible for students to “drop” from one quarter grading period to another?

Yes, it is possible, but it is important to note that the student does not necessarily “drop” a grade. The performance indicator is an indication of actual performance in relation to expected performance. Expectations shift as difficulty and complexity of tasks increase throughout the school year. Therefore, a student who demonstrates an indicator of “P” in the first quarter could possibly earn a “M” in the second quarter when the rigor of the

expectation has been increased. This shift from a “P” to a “M” indicates the student understands the major elements of the concept but may need more development of the details or application and more teacher support.

How does standards-based reporting differ for students with IEP’s?

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) must be provided with the same opportunity to receive grades in relation to expectations for grade level standards; this is a civil right. Since special education students are a heterogeneous group with various disabilities that impact learning, some may not achieve certain grade-level standards without special services and support. For students with accommodations, the content of the standard remains the same, but the method for learning and demonstrating mastery of a standard may be adjusted. Modifications, on the other hand, can mean changing the standard itself, identifying standards that are fundamentally related but also developmentally appropriate. The IEP Team makes decisions regarding what content areas, if any, require modifications of the grade level standards. For all students with an IEP, a supplemental progress report is provided that identifies how students are performing on appropriately challenging learning tasks as outlined in the goals and objectives of their IEP.

How are English Language Learners (ELL) who are still acquiring English language speaking and literacy skills graded?

Students are assessed at their current grade level using the appropriate grade-level standard-based report card. During parent conferences, teachers will discuss with parents and guardians the student’s current level of English proficiency as well as the student’s opportunity to learn the content and/or ability to demonstrate progress toward the appropriate grade-level standards.