



Elementary Report Cards FAQ

1. Why was the elementary report card revised?

The elementary curriculum and instructional methods have undergone significant changes since the report card was originally developed. These include different learning goals in the core and increased emphasis on other skill areas like technology. The district was also looking for a reporting mechanism that reflected current research and best practices for student growth and achievement. The purpose was to improve communication to parents and students.

2. What was the process for revising the report card?

The district began this process during the 2009-10 school year by forming a committee of over 30 members, including parents, teachers, administrators and support staff to review literature and research, survey stakeholders, and collect samples from other districts. Work continued over the next few years in grade level and department teams to identify the most important learning goals and create drafts. These were shared with all staff and parents for more feedback. The district technology department was also utilized to help build the system so parents could better access the report cards online.

3. What are learning goals?

Learning goals are the most important targets or standards in each of the curricular subjects. These were identified by teachers who have carefully studied the standards. For example, instead of receiving one grade for Mathematics, the subject is broken down into the specific goals addressed each grading period. Student progress on each learning goal is reported separately to provide clarity on what students know and are able to do. The learning goals for each subject and grade level are available on the district website.

4. What progress indicators will be used and what do they mean?

Instead of the various letter and symbol indicators used in the past, which numbered more than 15 and varied by grade level and subject, ONE consistent grading scale for all subjects and grades K-5 was developed. The grade scale is numerical (1-4) and is accompanied by a +/- option for the Characteristics of a Successful Learner. A copy of the rubric for grade indicators is on the district website.

5. What are rubrics and how will they be used in reporting progress?

A rubric is a tool that helps students know exactly what is needed to demonstrate proficiency. It sets the standard for expectations and levels of quality. Our progress indicators (grades) are rubric based, and teachers will be using this rubric and variations to provide feedback to students on their learning in the classroom as well as on the report card.

6. Will students still have traditional quizzes, tests and assignments?

YES. Much of what occurs in the classroom will be the same as usual. One noted difference is that the rubric allows teachers to use a variety of data to ascertain that a student has reached mastery of a standard, instead of having to rely solely on a test or quiz. Students will have the opportunity to self-evaluate as well, using the same rubric.

7. How is this grading different from what was done previously?

Traditional grading averages a student's achievement data over the course of a grading period. This new system focuses solely on mastery by collecting evidence to assess the student's learning against a standard. Also, traditional grading often includes other characteristics, such as work habits. In this new system, these are reported separately in the Characteristics of a Successful Learner section.

8. How will this new report card prepare students for middle school?

Research tells us that when students understand what they need to know and do, and receive specific, focused feedback on their progress, they become better learners. They know their strengths, needs and what kinds of learning experiences work best for them. These learners will do well when they transition to a more traditional grading system.

9. Will we have access to students' historical data?

YES. This was an important goal for our new report card as part of the effort to build a better communication tool.

10. How will we know if the new report is successful?

At the end of our initial year, we will collect feedback from all stakeholders and make any needed changes. Please help us by providing your input.