



Carlisle Area School District
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PARENT INFORMATION GUIDE

Elementary Standards-Based Report Cards

The purpose of this information guide is to provide parents in all Elementary Schools with information about the new standards-based report card and to answer the most frequently asked questions about reporting and grading aligned to academic standards.

In 2010, The Carlisle Area School District convened a group of administrators and teachers to begin revising the elementary report card. The committee reviewed literature on grading, looked at a variety of grading systems, and collected sample report cards and parent information from other school districts to help guide the process. The committee finalized its work during the 2012-2013 school year with a fully revised report card in a standards-based system at each grade level. During the 2013-2014 school year, the district conducted a pilot of this standards-based report card. This report card pilot was used with all teachers at LeTort Elementary School and with selected teachers at each grade level at Crestview Elementary School. A group of parents from both elementary schools participated on a parent advisory committee. This committee met throughout that school year and provided advice and guidance on this new reporting system. The district implemented a standards-based report card in Bellaire Elementary, LeTort Elementary, Mt. Holly Springs Elementary Schools and the remaining classrooms at Crestview Elementary School during the 2014-2015 school year. The 2015-2016 school year will finalize this transition by implementing the standards-based report card at Hamilton Elementary, Mooreland Elementary and North Dickinson Elementary Schools.

Why is the district transitioning to a standards-based reporting system? In 1999, Pennsylvania adopted a set of academic standards in all subject areas for grades K through 12. These standards have provided the foundation for the development of the district's curriculum for quite some time. The traditional report card no longer provides parents with enough information regarding their child's progress towards meeting these grade level standards. Parents are asking for more detailed information about their child's progress. Administrators and teachers want to provide parents and students with information regarding your individual achievement aligned to these statewide academic standards.

What are standards? A standards-based report card provides parents with specific information about their child's achievement relative to each standard. Academic standards are a set of learning goals for each grade level and subject area. These grade specific learning goals identify the content and skills students must achieve by the end of each school year. These standards increase in complexity as students move from one grade level to another. The school district curriculum, aligned to academic standards, is available on the district website. You may also review all K-12 academic standards on the PA Department of Education website at www.pdesas.org. Common core standards can be found at www.corestandards.org

Why are grades not used? The practice of averaging scores throughout a marking period is a formula that presumes that students must reach mastery of skills early in the school year with little room for error. In addition, grades are often calculated by combining how well the student met a

teacher's expectations, how much effort the student put forth, and how the student is doing in comparison to other students. A letter grade only tells the student and parent how well he or she performed on average in a broad area such as reading or math. A standards-based report card measures how well the individual student is doing in relationship to each grade level standard or learning goal. This gives parents a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses and encourages all students to do their best.

How is achievement identified on the report card? Each academic standard listed on the report card will be evaluated as follows: Exceeds the Standard (E); Meeting the Standard (M); Progress toward the Standard (P); and Intensive Progress Needed to Meet the Standard (I). Many of the skills listed on the report card are end-of-year competencies, so it will not be unusual for students to be "progressing towards the standard" at the beginning of the year, with proficiency or beyond by year's end. Achievement will be reported on a broad range of academic standards in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

How will the teacher assess my child's progress? In standards-based classrooms, the focus is on a student's performance over multiple opportunities, not simply grading and averaging tests and quizzes. Teachers collect evidence of students' achievement through careful observation, examination of student's work, discussions, projects, performance tasks, quizzes and tests. Teachers record information about each child's progress on a frequent basis, analyze and compile this information, and use this data to evaluate a child's progress towards meeting grade level standards. The district has developed a set of criteria for each standard on the report card. This criteria, in the form of rubrics, will help teachers evaluate the progress of your child's achievement at each marking period throughout the school year. A student who is identified as "making progress" has achieved appropriate learning and growth at each reporting period.

How is proficiency reported for Chapter 14 special education students, students with 504 Plans and Chapter 16 Gifted Students? No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulate assessment practices for students who are classified with a disability or are in need of specially designed instruction. Special education students must be graded using the same grading system as all other students and their academic program must be aligned to the state's academic standards. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) team determines, what, if any, accommodations and/or modifications are needed for the student to meet the standards. The IEP team aligns each annual goal to the appropriate standards and monitors progress throughout the school year.

What are learner qualities? The work habits that students bring to the learning environment are critical to a student's long-term success. Learner qualities have been divided into two distinct areas: learning behaviors and social behaviors. These are the characteristics of a successful learner. These learner qualities will be assessed separately from the academic standards and will be evaluated as follows: Meeting the Standard (M); Progress toward the Standard (P); and Intensive Progress Needed to Meet the Standard (I). Teachers reinforce these skills with each child, emphasizing the importance of strong work habits and positive social interactions. Most students will meet the standard for learner behaviors early in the school year.

How can parents support their children at home? A key advantage of the new reporting system is that it provides more specific information to parents in working with their child at home on identified skill areas. The academic standards or learning goals help parents know what their child is working on in school and can provide the basis for conversations at home between parents and their children. This information can be used by parents to support the school's efforts in educating their child to reach proficiency or to move their child to more advanced levels. The report card serves as one communication device used by teachers to inform parents of their child's progress.

Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher as needed. You play a vital role in your child's academic success.

How will our children be awarded for their academic achievement? Students will receive academic achievement awards at the end of the school year, based on their growth and progress in specific skill areas throughout the school year.

How will our children's progress be reported in the areas of library, art, music, and physical education class? Children will continue to receive a progress report from these specialists using the former grading system.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accuracy: Reading words correctly.

Assessment: Any teacher-administered task that provides information to the teacher about what a student knows or can do. Assessments may or may not be scored, depending on their purpose. Assessments that are not scored are typically used to inform a teacher's future instruction.

Automaticity: Reading words accurately, quickly, and with little effort.

Content: Writing with explanations through examples, reasons, or opinions.

Conventions: Writing with correct punctuation, mechanics, capitalization, and complete sentences.

Decoding: The process of blending letter sounds to read a word.

Dolch Sight Words: Words that cannot be sounded out and must be known by sight (memorized).

Encoding: The process of blending letter sounds to spell a word.

Expression: Reading with appropriate tone, natural phrasing, and attention to punctuation.

Evidence: Anything a teacher can use as an indicator of what a student knows or can do. This may include direct teacher observation, examination of student work, discussions, projects, performance tasks, quizzes and tests, etc.

Figurative Language: simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, alliteration, personification, allusion

Focus: Writing on topic with clear ideas.

Metacognitive Thinking Strategies: Strategies that good readers use:

Summarizing: The ongoing ability to state the meaning of the text in a shortened form.

Making Inferences: The ongoing ability to make predictions using background knowledge and details from the text (picture clues, title, key words).

Monitoring Understanding: Consistent use of phonics skills to decode and the consistent checking for meaning.

Making Connections: The ongoing ability to make connections between what is read to your own life.

Questioning: The ongoing ability to create and answer questions.

Visualizing: The ongoing ability to create a picture in your head from the words on the page.

Synthesizing: The ongoing ability to make meaning from the text by using the other six thinking strategies.

Author's Purpose: The ongoing ability to understand why the author wrote the passage.

Multisyllabic Words: Words with many syllables.

Open-Ended Questions: Questions that require students to provide written evidence from the text.

Organization: Writing with a good beginning, middle with details, definite ending, and with everything explained in order.

Progress: Continuous learning and forward movement towards meeting the standard at specific times throughout the year and at the end of each grade level.

Propaganda/Bias: Persuasive tactics used to influence people to believe, buy, or do something. Bias is a judgment based on a personal point of view.

Reading Fluency: Reading quickly and accurately with comprehension and appropriate expression.

Rubric: A rubric is a set of criteria for student work that describes the quality of work at each level of performance. Rubrics are strong instructional tools that aide teachers in evaluating student work and have been used in schools for many years.

Six Syllable Types: These syllable types are used in the English language in order to read and spell correctly:

Closed: like in the word "mat".

Open: like in the word "go".

Consonant l-e: like in the word "mantle".

Vowel Team: like in the work "plain".

Vowel-Consonant-Silent E: like in the word "cave".

R-Controlled: like in the word "car".

***Schwa Sound:** like in the word "basket". *Can appear in any syllable type.

Skill: Individual building blocks that students need to master in order to show proficiency towards specific learning targets.

Standard: Grade level learning goals that define what students should know and be able to do by the end of the school year. These learning goals increase in complexity as students move from one grade level to another.

Story Elements: Character, setting, problem/resolution, climax, rising action, falling action and theme.

Style: Writing with colorful language, exact words, and a variety of sentences.