

STANDARDS-BASED REPORTING

CBSD GUIDE

Frequently Asked Questions

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PART I *Standards-Based Reporting Overview*

What is a standard?

A standard is a statement that identifies what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Learning Standards for each content area subject and grade level are identified through the [PA Core Standards](#) and the [CBSD Curriculum](#).

“By comparing one child’s performance to a clear standard, parents, children and teachers all know precisely what is expected. Every time a student attempts a task, the performance is compared to the standard, not to other children’s performances. The most important advantages for children and families are fairness, clarity, and improved learning.”
~The Leadership & Learning Center

What is the purpose of standards-based reporting?

The purpose of a Standards-Based Reporting system is to provide detailed feedback to parents, students, and teachers regarding the progress their child is making toward specific learning standards at their grade level. A standards-based report allows parents and students to understand more clearly what is expected in school and how to help them be successful in a rigorous academic program.

How does a standards-based system differ from a letter grade system?

Elementary letter grades typically include elements of **Product** (academic achievement), **Process** (work habits), and **Progress** (degree of growth). The combining of these three variables makes letter grades subjective and less accurate in terms of conveying student achievement in the elementary grades.

The standards-based system measures how well individual students are doing solely in relation to grade-level learning goals or standards. This gives parents, teachers, and students an understanding of what students have mastered and what they need to continue to work toward learning. Standards identify specific strengths and weaknesses. These give quality information from which to generate goals for continued growth.

What benefits does a standards-based system offer?

A standards-based system:

- 1) Defines the **knowledge** and **skills** students should master at each grade.
- 2) Defines clear **learning goals** for each school year.
- 3) Enhances **reliable communication** between and among teachers.
- 4) Uses **consistent language** which is representative of instruction in all elementary grades and across all buildings
- 5) Is grounded in nationally recognized **standards for learning**.
- 6) Identifies **developmental learning patterns** over the course of a child's elementary career.
- 7) Is supported by current educational and **learning-based research**.

"If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning."
~Dr. Carol Dweck

PART II *Standards-Based Reporting Rationale*

Why is this 2014 a good time to move toward a standards-based reporting system?

CB has revised the elementary curriculum over the past five years in all subject areas to better reflect state and district standards. Our revised curriculum mirrors standards-based instruction and assessments. Thus, a standards-based reporting system will be the final step in creating a fully unified and interconnected educational system within the CB elementary educational program.

In addition, a standards-based reporting system gives more specific information than traditional letter grades, and reports how well students are progressing towards achieving the standards expected at each grade level. They measure student performance in an objective and equitable way.

What general research supports the adoption of a standards-based progress report?

Over the last two years, the Central Bucks School District has been in the process of researching, studying, and developing a standards-based reporting system based on educational best practices and the rigor defined by curricular expectations for teaching and learning. Gathering information and input from local, state, national, and international school districts which currently employ standards-based reporting, a committee of teachers and administrators representing each elementary school building collaborated on all development phases. Parent focus groups and pilot families also contributed to the design of this work.

How will teachers evaluate student achievement over the course of an academic quarter?

In standard-based classrooms, student performance is evaluated on a continual basis; teachers collect evidence from a variety of sources including observations, examination of

class work, discussions, projects, quizzes, and tests. Teachers record information about each child’s progress, compile that information, and use the data to evaluate student performance.

Are neighboring districts are successfully using a standards-based model?

Many elementary school districts in our area, as well as across the country, have made the switch to a standards-based grading system. This is a national movement based on years of research.

Are standards-based reporting systems motivating for students?

Standards-based reporting systems provide students with the opportunity to be intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation is the most powerful kind of motivation—when a student is involved in the learning process, knowing their strengths and where they need to improve, the student can work with teachers and parents to set meaningful goals, strive to achieve them, and experience success.

Learning is developmental. For elementary students, they are in the process of learning how to learn. By working through a Standards-Based Reporting Process, the students will gain insight into their unique learning styles and needs. Once students reach middle school, they are prepared to succeed.

Letter grades should not serve as compensation, but rather as communication.
~Rick Wormelli, 2013

PART III *The CBSD Standards-Based Reporting System*

What can I expect to see on my child’s progress report?

Standards-based progress reports provide the level of proficiency on specific standards for each subject area. Each subject is sub-divided into a list of essential skills and knowledge that students need to master. Scores (**Indicators**) are derived from observations, projects, and tests (**Products**). Each skill listed is scored separately.

The CBSD Standards-Based Report is one document which holds two templates: the **Conference Report** and the **Progress Report**.

“Tell me and I will forget, teach me and I will remember, involve me and I will learn.”
~Benjamin Franklin

- ✓ **Conference Reports** are completed after the **1st and 3rd quarters**. This report offers achievement information and fosters quality conversations about learning for parents, teachers, and students. Your child, while in 1st through 6th grade, may be invited to the conferences for both marking periods.
- ✓ **Progress Reports** are completed by teachers at the end of the **2nd and 4th quarters**. The Progress Report communicates specific mastery levels, as well as student strengths and goals for continued growth. Special subject areas such as art, music, PE,

and Library are evaluated during these marking periods. During the 2016-2017 school year, Quest will also be evaluated.

How frequently will Progress Reports be shared?

Progress Reports will be issued on a quarterly schedule. Below is an overview of the pages completed at each quarter.

CBSD Student Progress Report Overview

<i>Quarter</i>	<i>Reports</i>	<i>Sections</i>	<i>Description</i>
1st	<i>Conference Report</i>	2	Progress is based on demonstrated mastery levels. Drafts of strengths and goals are reviewed/ revised with parents and students during the fall conference
2nd	<i>Progress Report</i>	2-6	Progress is based on routinely demonstrated mastery levels. Comments are included in one or more content areas to further define student achievement, strengths, and/or goals over time.
3rd	<i>Conference Report</i>	2	Progress is based on demonstrated mastery levels. 1 st and 3 rd quarter progress show growth over time. Drafts of strengths and goals are reviewed / revised with parents and students during spring conferences.
4th	<i>Progress Reports</i>	2-6	Progress is based on routinely demonstrated mastery levels. 2 nd and 4 th quarter progress show growth over time. Comments are included in one or more content areas to further define student achievement, strengths, and/or goals over time.

What does “EMAL” mean and how is it used to report achievement?

EMAL is an acronym used to define the levels of proficiency students achieve in terms of district-defined learning standards. The CBSD Progress Report uses EMAL as follows:

E	<i>Exceeding Standard</i> Student consistently performs beyond the standard (concepts, processes, and skills).
M	<i>Meeting Standard</i> Student consistently achieves the standard (concepts, processes, and skills).
A	<i>Approaching Standard</i> Student is progressing toward the standard (concepts, processes, and skills), but has yet to demonstrate consistent mastery.
L	<i>Limited Progress Toward Standard</i> Student is making minimal progress toward the standard (concepts, processes, and skills). An L rating indicates the student’s performance is well below the standard.

On a standards-based progress report a child might receive the following:

<i>Reading</i>	
M	<i>Reads and comprehends grade level text</i>
M	<i>Reads with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension</i>
E	<i>Uses word analysis skills and strategies to accurately decode text</i>
M	<i>Meets independent reading goals</i>
A	<i>Uses grade appropriate comprehension strategies and skills to understand fictional text</i>
A	<i>Identifies, interprets, and analyzes various fiction genres</i>
M	<i>Identifies literary elements, main ideas, and story details</i>
M	<i>Uses text evidence to respond to literature</i>
A	<i>Uses grade appropriate comprehension strategies and skills to understand informational text</i>
E	<i>Uses text evidence to respond to informational text</i>

How will the Progress Report convey student achievement?

Each quarter, student progress is evaluated based on the following:

- a) **Success Standards**
- b) **Learning Standards**
- c) **Student-Specific Strengths**
- d) **Student-Specific Goals**

a) **Success Standards** define the work habits and behaviors that students need for school success. Success Standards provide an in-depth look at a student’s observable classroom conduct and skills, and evaluates them on a scale of 1 to 3, rather than the current qualifiers of Y (Yes) or N (No). Success Standards and Comments are arranged together on one page in order to view all four marking periods. This helps to clearly identify the student’s areas of growth and need over time.

3	Demonstrates consistently
2	Demonstrates often
1	Demonstrates rarely

- b) **Learning Standards** are defined for Reading, Writing, and Math are evaluated as *Exceeding Standard, Meeting Standard, Approaching Standard, or Limited Progress Toward Standard*. Grades 4-6 will also be evaluated in Science and Social Studies.
- c) **Student-Specific Strengths** are documented through Success and Learning Standards, as well as through teacher comments.
- d) **Student-Specific Goals** are identified through the Success and Learning Standards, and are highlighted through teacher comments.

Are letter grades motivating for students?

Research has shown that letter grades do not motivate students to learn. On the contrary, three consistent effects of using – and especially, emphasizing– letter grades:

- a) ***Grades reduce students' interest in learning.*** One of the most well-researched findings in the field of motivational psychology is that the more people are rewarded for work, the more they lose interest in that work (Kohn,1993). Thus, when students are told their learning will count for a grade – they are likely to view the learning as a chore.
- b) ***Grades reduce students' desire for challenging tasks.*** Students of all ages who concentrate on getting a good grade tend to pick the easiest possible assignment when given a choice (Harter, 1978; Harter and Guzman, 1986; Kage, 1991; Milton et al., 1986). Children pressured to get an A are less inclined to challenge themselves. Thus, students who cut corners may not be lazy, as much as rational; they are adapting to an environment where good grades, not intellectual exploration, are what count.
- c) ***Grades reduce the quality of students' thinking.*** One series of cognitive psychology studies found that students given numerical grades were significantly less creative than those who received qualitative feedback without grades. The more the task required creative thinking, the worse the performance. Providing students with comments in addition to a grade didn't help: the highest achievement occurred only when comments were given instead of letter grades (Butler, 1987; Butler, 1988; Butler and Nisan, 1986).



PART IV
Standards-Based Grading

How do teachers assess mastery?

Standards require students to understand more than just facts—they must understand concepts and demonstrate that understanding using the skills they have acquired while learning the content. Teachers determine when a student achieves mastery by that student's performance on multiple assignments and assessments.

Do standards convey behavioral progress along with achievement progress?

Knowing that effort and work habits are as important as academic learning, our standards-based progress report communicates both. Achievement is reported through Learning Standards. Observable behaviors, such as effort, risk-taking, attitude, and perseverance are documented separately, via Success Standards. Work habits may also be characterized in narrative form through teacher comments.

What do students need to do in order to achieve an “M” (Meeting Standard)?

We begin by asking, “What do students need to learn to achieve the standard?” Instead of considering how tests and quizzes count towards a student’s final grade, teachers rely on multiple sources of evidence to determine their mastery of standards.

*“Feedback, when given well, should not alienate the receiver of the feedback, but should motivate them to perform better.”
~M.O., Fortune 500 Manager*

What does a standards-based “A” (Approaching Standard) mean?

Learning is a process and it should be expected that repeated exposure and experiences are necessary to gain security of new skills and strategies. A score of “A” or Approaching Standard indicates the student is progressing toward the standard. Once a student demonstrates a thorough understanding of concepts and skills, he or she would receive an “M” for Meeting Standard.

How do parents explain to their child why he/she did not achieve an “E”?

Some concepts and skills are more difficult to grasp than others, but given time and motivation students can continually challenge themselves.

It is important that adults convey to children that learning is a process that needs to be respected. While learning a new skill or concept, a score of an “A” (Approaching Standard) is appropriate. A score of an “M” (Meeting Standard) demonstrating mastery is to be celebrated. A score of an “E” (Exceeding Standard) indicates a skill strength that is above and beyond the grade level expectations at the time of the report.

While measuring progress toward a grade-level standard, can a mark ever “go down”?

Yes. Student skills are expected to develop in sophistication over the course of the year. As concepts grow in complexity, expectations and evaluations also increase in complexity.

Consider this hypothetical scenario: In first grade mathematics, students might be assessed on their ability to “Count by 2s”. In the first marking period, they are expected to count by 2s up to 20 to meet proficiency, but by the end of the year they are expected to count by 2s to 100. After the first quarter, your child is “Meeting the Standard” *thus far*, but as the skill demands increase, the child’s abilities must consistently improve to maintain that “Meeting the Standard” mark.

My child is academically strong; will standards-based teaching, learning and assessing challenge him/her?

In the classroom, teachers have always been, and continue to be, required to challenge students who are achieving grade level standards. Teachers differentiate instruction so that students continue to grow and progress. This will be no different with the new reporting tool. In fact, more than ever, teachers will be able to identify who has mastered the standards and who needs additional instruction or interventions.

How will a standards-based reporting system affect a student with an IEP?

Learning standards for all students are the same; however, students with IEPs may have specific goals, accommodations and/or modifications that enable them to meet the standards. Students with IEPs (Individual Educational Plans) will receive quarterly feedback on their own specific learning goals through the IEP document. All other reporting will be conveyed through the standards-based progress report.

How will a standards-based reporting system affect English Language Learners?

ELLs (English Language Learners) come to our communities with a variety of educational backgrounds and require a variety of supports to access the curriculum standards; at times, the educational program for an ELL student may be adjusted to enable the student to acquire more academic vocabulary and if the standards are modified, this is described on the supplemental progress report that accompanies the progress report.

PART V

The Implementation of Standards-Based Reporting

Who will use the CBSD standards-based reporting system and when will it be used?

The CBSD Standards-Based Reporting System is designed for elementary schools only. It will be used in grades 1-6. It will not be used beyond grade 6. This system will be employed in the fall of 2014.

How will CB convey, and support, the implementation of standards-based reporting system?

The conveying of information regarding this standards-based system has been ongoing since the development process began. To continue this effort, letters were sent home to all CB families of elementary students, along with an informational brochure. These documents have been posted on our CBSD website. Additional resources include:

- ✓ Parent Handbook
- ✓ Teacher Handbook
- ✓ Staff Development Training
- ✓ Video tutorials
- ✓ Parent Meetings
- ✓ School Newsletters

PART VI

The Development of a Standards-Based Reporting System

What process was used to research and develop the CBSD Progress Report?

The RSA (Reporting Student Achievement) Core Team worked for over one year, beginning in the spring of 2013, to research and draft our new reporting system. Parents, teachers, administrators, and pilot families have provided constructive feedback during the many phases of document development. Curriculum Coordinators and curriculum teams incorporated proposed recommendations throughout this process. During the first year of implementation, constructive feedback has been provided by students, teachers, parents, administrators, and curriculum coordinators. The current revisions to the document are a result of that feedback.

What are grade-level standards based upon?

The Progress Report reflects language from the following standards documents:

Subject	Standards Document
English Language Arts	Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (www.corestandards.org)
Mathematics	Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (www.corestandards.org)
Science	<i>Section not revised extensively (see below)</i>
Social Studies	<i>Section not revised extensively (see below)</i>
Art	National Standards for Arts Education
Music	National Standards for Music Education
Physical Education & Health	National Association of Sport and Physical Education and National Health Education Standards
Library	American Association of School Librarians

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) July 2, 2010. States adopting the CCSS must adopt the document verbatim and in its entirety but are permitted to add statements to incorporate any PA standards not addressed in CCSS. Alignment studies and transition planning continues with full implementation of the CSS (Core State Standards). By aligning language on our new progress report to CSS now, CBSD will save time later. CSS standards are not yet available for Science and Social Studies. CBSD will examine these sections of the elementary progress report once they are developed and released. Additional information about the CCSS/CSS initiative can be found at <http://www.pdesas.org/Standard/PACore>.

How were the rating scales developed?

The rating scales were developed by CB teachers and administrators after considering classroom practices, examples from other districts, phases of child development, and beliefs about communicating student progress. Success Standards and Progress Standards define our rating scales. Progress Standards rate academic achievement and Success Standards rate learning behaviors.

How were the Special Subject sections developed?

Throughout the 2013-2014 school year, special subject teachers from across the district in Music, Art, PE, and Library worked to develop specific sections of the report card. In each case, they based the language on the report card on the nationally recognized standards document from their professional association.

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