

Middletown Township Public Schools

STANDARDS-BASED REPORT CARDS

The Middletown Township Public School District uses Standards-Based Report Cards for Grades K-5. The change to a Standards-Based Report Card came from the belief that our previous report card did not fully communicate what students are expected to know and be able to do as set forth in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and now the Common Cores State Standards. This report card benefits students, teachers and parents/guardians and allows students to be more aware of what is expected of them and provides parents with a more detailed outline of the expectations in each of the major academic areas. We believe that your understanding of what is expected of your child and how well he or she is progressing towards the goals at his or her grade level is very important. We look forward to working together to provide your child with the knowledge and tools to be successful and to reach his or her fullest potential.

1. What is Standards-Based grade reporting?

A Standards-Based grade reporting system is designed to inform parents about their child's progress towards achieving specific learning standards. The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and the Common Cores State Standards establish high and challenging performance expectations for all students. They describe what students should know and be able to do, and serve as the basis for the Middletown Public School's curriculum, instruction and assessment model.

2. Why do we use a Standards-Based Report Card?

The report card provides more information to parents about student progress on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and the Common Cores State Standards. On a traditional report card, 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 further expanded by a list of skills and knowledge students are responsible for learning. Students receive a separate mark for each item on the list.

3. What is the purpose of the Standards-Based Report Card?

The purpose of the Standards-Based Report Card is to provide feedback that is more detailed to parents regarding the progress their children are making towards specific content indicators at each grade level. This report card allows parents and students to understand more clearly what is expected at each grade level. With this understanding, parents are better able to guide and support their child helping him/her to be successful in a rigorous academic program.

4. How does the Standards-Based Report Card compare to the traditional letter grade system?

Standards-Based Report Card reporting is different from traditional letter grade reporting. Letter grades are often calculated by combining how well the student met a teacher's expectations, how the student performed on assignments and tests, how much effort the teacher believes the student put in and how the student is doing in comparison to classmates. Letter grades do not tell parents which skills their child has mastered or whether he or she is working at grade level. The Standards-Based Report Card measures how well an individual student is doing in relation to the grade level standards, not the work of other students. This gives parents a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses and encourages all students to do their best.

5. How can your child exceed the Standards?

Another change for students is understanding the concept of exceeding the Standard. Exceeding is not the equivalent of an A on a traditional report card. For example, if a fifth-grader received A's on every math test during the marking period, he or she would probably receive an A on a traditional report card. If those math tests measured only the concepts fifth graders are expected to master, those A's would be the equivalent of meeting the standard on a Standards-Based Report Card; the student is doing what he or she should be doing very well, but not necessarily more. Standards-Based Report Cards encourage students to demonstrate their ability to apply skills and knowledge beyond grade level expectations. Performance is characterized by self-motivation and the ability to apply skills with consistent accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality.

6. What is the difference between a grade of 2, 2+ and 3?

Learning is a process and it should be expected that repeated exposure and experiences are necessary to gain ownership of new skills and strategies. An assessment score of 2 indicates the student is progressing towards the standard. As students demonstrate increased understanding of a standard and demonstrate more consistent performance requiring less support they would receive a 2+. Once a student demonstrates thorough understanding and performance is characterized by ability to consistently apply skills with accuracy and quality, he or she would receive a 3. This move from a 2 to 2+ to a 3 can take place at any point during the school year and is very student specific.

7. How does a student receive a grade of “E”?

When a student can demonstrate their ability to apply a thorough in-depth knowledge of basic and extended concepts and skills with performance characterized by self-motivation and the ability to apply skills with consistent accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality, the student would result in “E” for exceptional performance.

8. My child has an IEP. How will he or she be assessed?

There are modifications and accommodations in your child’s IEP to support his or her progress on grade level standards as assessed on a Standards-Based Report Card. A lack of indicated progress on the report card would require further exploration of additional modifications and accommodations.

9. Does this system place more emphasis on daily interactions between teacher and student as opposed to standardized scores?

Although neither traditional nor Standards-Based Report Cards rely solely on standardized test scores, a major characteristic of elementary assessment has always been the daily interaction throughout the process of learning. Standards-Based Report Cards better provide for in-depth communication on the continuum of learning.

10. How do you expect parents to explain to their children why they did not get an “E”?

It is important that parents and teachers have honest conversations with students. Some concepts and skills are more difficult to grasp than others, but given time and motivation students can continually challenge themselves. Attitudes are contagious and it is important that the adults involved convey to the child that learning is a process that needs to be respected. A grade of 2 while learning a new skill or concept is appropriate. A grade of 3 demonstrating mastery is to be celebrated. A grade of “E” indicates a strength being recognized that is above and beyond the grade level expectations.

11. What if I still have questions?

This is meant to be a brief overview of the Standards-Based Report Cards. Be sure to view the report card for each grade level posted on our district website as well as the documents that further explain each of the objectives assessed in Literacy and Mathematic. Should you have additional questions, please contact your child’s school.